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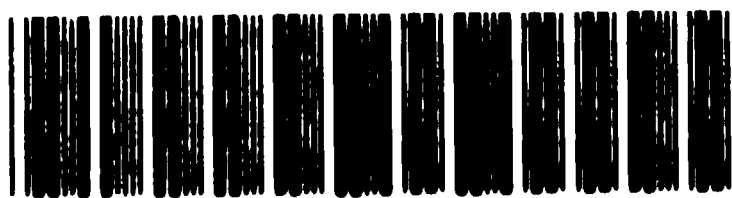
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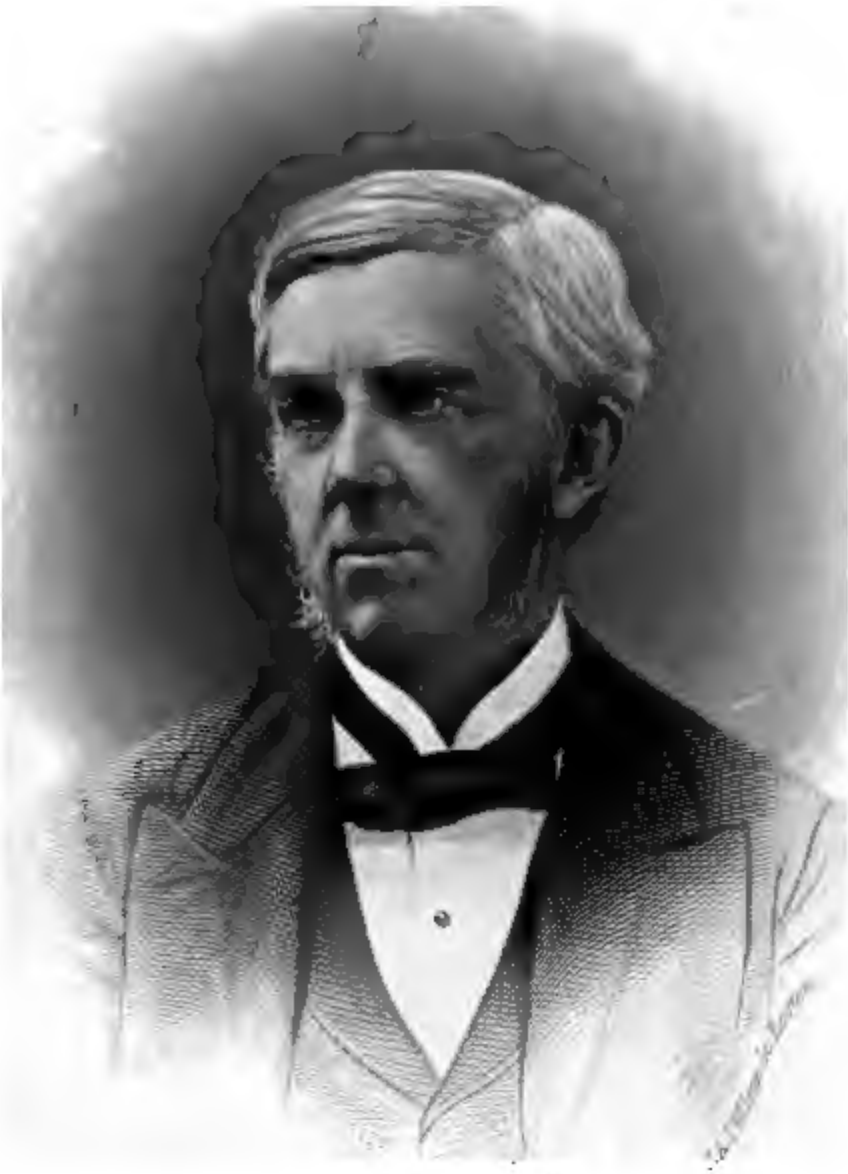






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*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

THE  
“BREAKFAST-TABLE”  
SERIES

*The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*  
*The Professor at the Breakfast-Table*  
*The Poet at the Breakfast-Table*

BY  
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES



GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS  
BROADWAY, LUDGATE HILL  
NEW YORK; 9, LAFAYETTE PLACE  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES is essentially what is termed a "funny fellow." He is one of the "funniest fellows" to be found, perhaps, in his native town of Boston and his native state of Massachusetts, which is saying a good deal; for in that grim, starched, intolerant, Puritanical country called New England a good deal more fun than you are aware of may be found, by those who seek for it, slyly lurking. A well-to-do, well-reputed, easy-going physician, Dr. Holmes has been for a long time, I take it, exempt from the cares of an actually bread-winning literary life, and can know but little of that "eternal want of pence which vexes public men." He is one of that select *cénacle* who are to be found at the gatherings of the old *alumni* of Harvard, and, occasionally, in the umbrageous groves of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields' book-store in Washington Street, Boston. An illustrious knot they form: Longfellow and Emerson; Whittier and Whipple; Holmes and Lowell, and Agassiz—all the *beaux esprits* of the *Atlantic Monthly*, in a word, with an appropriate Coryphæus in the person of Mr. James T. Fields, himself a ripe scholar, a poet of no mean order, and a "funny fellow" to boot; for he possesses a rich collection of New-England witticisms and Yankee drolleries. Dr. Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* has long been favourably known as a series of essays

abounding in thoughtful and kindly humour, and keen observation of men, manners, and things. His humour, perhaps, is more thoroughly *English* than that of any of his contemporaries ; and this is most strongly exemplified in his poems. The “Wonderful One-Hoss Shay,” and the “Height of the Ridiculous,” might be enshrined among George Colman’s “Broad Grins,”—it being perfectly well understood, however, that they are free from the coarseness with which those same “Broad Grins” are disfigured. Less subtle, less sardonic, less witty, perhaps, than Mr. Lowell—less quaint and droll than Artemus Ward,—Dr. Holmes’s productions are mainly distinguished by their simple, genial comicality. He does not make you sigh even while you laugh : and he does not make you ask yourself why you laugh at all. You laugh at him just as you would at a droll face or a comic picture.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

**THE**  
**Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table**



# AUTOCRAT

OF

## THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

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### I.

I WAS just going to say, when I was interrupted, that one of the many ways of classifying minds is under the heads of arithmetical and algebraical intellects. All economical and practical wisdom is an extension or variation of the following arithmetical formula :  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Every philosophical proposition has the more general character of the expression,  $a + b = c$ . We are mere operatives, empirics, and egotists, until we learn to think in letters instead of figures.

They all stared. There is a divinity student lately come among us to whom I commonly address remarks like the above, allowing him to take a certain share in the conversation, so far as assent or pertinent questions are involved. He abused his liberty on this occasion by presuming to say that Leibnitz had the same observation.—No, sir, I replied, he has not. But he said a mighty good thing about mathematics, that sounds something like it, and you found it, *not in the original*, but quoted by Dr. Thomas Reid. I will tell the company what he did say, one of these days.

If I belong to a Society of Mutual Admiration?—I blush to say that I do not at this present moment. I once did, however. It was the first association to which I ever heard the term applied ; a body of scientific young men in a great foreign city, who admired their teacher, and to some extent each other. Many of them deserved it : they have become famous since. It amuses me to hear the talk of one of those beings described by Thackeray—

“ Letters four do form his name ”—

about a social development which belongs to the very noblest stage of civilisation. All generous companies of artists, authors, philanthropists, men of science, are, or ought to be, Societies of Mutual Admiration. A man of genius, or any kind of superiority, is not debarred from admiring the same quality in another, nor the other from returning his admiration. They may even asso-



ciate together and continue to think highly of each other. And so of a dozen such men, if any one place is fortunate enough to hold so many. The being referred to above assumes several false premises. First, that men of talent necessarily hate each other. Secondly, that intimate knowledge or habitual association destroys our admiration of persons whom we esteemed highly at a distance. Thirdly, that a circle of clever fellows, who meet together to dine and have a good time, have signed a constitutional compact to glorify themselves, and to put down him and the fraction of the human race not belonging to their number. Fourthly, that it is an outrage that he is not asked to join them.

Here the company laughed a good deal, and the old gentleman who sits opposite said, "That's it! that's it!"

I continued, for I was in the talking vein. As to clever people's hating each other, I think *a little* extra talent does sometimes make people jealous. They become irritated by perpetual attempts and failures, and it hurts their tempers and dispositions. Unpretending mediocrity is good, and genius is glorious; but a weak flavour of genius in an essentially common person is detestable. It spoils the grand neutrality of a common-place character, as the rinsings of an unwashed wine-glass spoil a draught of fair water. No wonder the poor fellow we spoke of, who always belongs to this class of slightly flavoured mediocrities, is puzzled and vexed by the strange sight of a dozen men of capacity working and playing together in harmony. He and his fellows are always fighting. With them familiarity naturally breeds contempt. If they ever praise each other's bad drawings, or broken-winded novels, or spavined verses, nobody ever supposed it was from admiration; it was simply a contract between themselves and a publisher or dealer.

If the Mutuals have really nothing among them worth admiring, that alters the question. But if they are men with noble powers and qualities, let me tell you, that, next to youthful love and family affections, there is no human sentiment better than that which unites the Societies of Mutual Admiration. And what would literature or art be without such associations? Who can tell what we owe to the Mutual Admiration Society of which Shakespeare and Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher were members? Or to that of which Addison and Steele formed the centre, and which gave us the *Spectator*? Or to that where Johnson, and Goldsmith, and Burke, and Reynolds, and Beauclerk, and Boswell, most admiring among all admirers, met together? Was there any great harm in the fact that the Irvings and Paulding wrote in company? or any unpardonable cabal in the literary union of Verplanck and Bryant and Sands, and as many more as they chose to associate with them?

The poor creature does not know what he is talking about, *when he abuses* this noblest of institutions. Let him inspect its

mysteries through the knot-hole he has secured, but not use that orifice as a medium for his popgun. Such a society is the crown of a literary metropolis ; if a town has not material for it, and spirit and good feeling enough to organise it, it is a mere caravansary, fit for a man of genius to lodge in, but not to live in. Foolish people hate and dread and envy such an association of men of varied powers and influence, because it is lofty, serene, impregnable, and, by the necessity of the case, exclusive. Wise ones are prouder of the title M.S.M.A. than of all their other honours put together.

All generous minds have a horror of what are commonly called "facts." They are the brute beasts of the intellectual domain. Who does not know fellows that always have an ill-conditioned fact or two which they lead after them into decent company like so many bull-dogs, ready to let them slip at every ingenious suggestion, or convenient generalisation, or pleasant fancy? I allow no "facts" at this table. What! Because bread is good, and wholesome, and necessary, and nourishing, shall you thrust a crumb into my windpipe while I am talking? Do not these muscles of mine represent a hundred loaves of bread? and is not my thought the abstract of ten thousand of these crumbs of truth with which you would choke off my speech?

[The above remark must be conditioned and qualified for the vulgar mind. The reader will of course understand the precise amount of seasoning which must be added to it before he adopts it as one of the axioms of his life. The speaker disclaims all responsibility for its abuse in incompetent hands.]

This business of conversation is a very serious matter. There are men that it weakens one to talk with an hour more than a day's fasting would do. Mark this that I am going to say, for it is as good as a working professional man's advice, and costs you nothing: It is better to lose a pint of blood from your veins than to have a nerve tapped. Nobody measures your nervous force as it runs away, nor bandages your brain and marrow after the operation.

There are men of *esprit* who are excessively exhausting to some people. They are the talkers who have what may be called *jerky* minds. Their thoughts do not run in the natural order of sequence. They say bright things on all possible subjects, but their zigzags rack you to death. After a jolting half-hour with one of these jerky companions, talking with a dull friend affords great relief. It is like taking the cat in your lap after holding a squirrel.

What a comfort a dull but kindly person is, to be sure, at times! A ground-glass shade over a gas-lamp does not bring more solace to our dazzled eyes than such a one to our minds.

"Do not dull people bore you?" said one of the lady-boarders—the same that sent me her autograph-book last week with a request for a few original stanzas, not remembering that The

*Pactolin* pays me five dollars a line for every thing I write in its columns.

"Madam," said I (she and the century were in their teens together), "all men are bores, except when we want them. There never was but one man whom I would trust with my latch-key."

"Who might that favoured person be?"

"Zimmerman."

The men of genius that I fancy most have erectile heads, like the cobra-di-capello. You remember what they tell of William Pinkney, the great pleader; how in his eloquent paroxysms the veins of his neck would swell, and his face flush, and his eyes glitter, until he seemed on the verge of apoplexy. The hydraulic arrangements for supplying the brain with blood are only second in importance to its own organisation. The bulbous-headed fellows that steam well when they are at work are the men that draw big audiences, and give us marrowy books and pictures. It is a good sign to have one's feet grow cold when he is writing. A great writer and speaker once told me that he often wrote with his feet in hot water; but for this, *all* his blood would have run into his head, as the mercury sometimes withdraws into the ball of a thermometer.

You don't suppose that my remarks made at this table are like so many postage-stamps, do you—each to be only once uttered? If you do, you are mistaken. He must be a poor creature that does not often repeat himself. Imagine the author of the excellent piece of advice, "Know thyself," never alluding to that sentiment again during the course of a protracted existence! Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools; and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang up his hammer after it has driven its first nail? I shall never repeat a conversation, but an idea often. I shall use the same types when I like, but not commonly the same stereotypes. A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, by a new and express train of associations.

Sometimes, but rarely, one may be caught making the same speech twice over, and yet be held blameless. Thus, a certain lecturer, after performing in an inland city, where dwells a *literatrice* of note, was invited to meet her and others over the social tea-cup. She pleasantly referred to his many wanderings in his new occupation. "Yes," he replied; "I am like the Huma, the bird that never lights; being always in the cars, as he is always on the wing." Years elapsed. The lecturer visited the same place once more for the same purpose. Another social cup after the lecture, and a second meeting with the distinguished lady. "You are constantly going from place to place," she said. "Yes," he answered; "I am like the Huma,"—and finished the sentence as before.

What horrors, when it flashed over him that he had made this fine speech, word for word, twice over ! Yet it was not true, as the lady might perhaps have fairly inferred, that he had embellished his conversation with the Huma daily during that whole interval of years. On the contrary, he had never once thought of the odious fowl until the recurrence of precisely the same circumstances brought up precisely the same idea. He ought to have been proud of the accuracy of his mental adjustments. Given certain factors, and a sound brain should always evolve the same fixed product with the certainty of Babbage's calculating machine.

What a satire, by the way, is that machine on the mere mathematician ! A Frankenstein-monster, a thing without brains and without heart, too stupid to make a blunder ; that turns out results like a corn-sheller, and never grows any wiser or better though it grind a thousand bushels of them !

I have an immense respect for a man of talents *plus* "the mathematics." But the calculating power alone should seem to be the least human of qualities, and to have the smallest amount of reason in it ; since a machine can be made to do the work of three or four calculators, and better than any one of them. Sometimes I have been troubled that I had not a deeper intuitive apprehension of the relations of numbers. But the triumph of the ciphering hand-organ has consoled me. I always fancy I can hear the wheels clicking in a calculator's brain. The power of dealing with numbers is a kind of "detached lever" arrangement, which may be put into a mighty poor watch. I suppose it is about as common as the power of moving the ears voluntarily, which is a moderately rare endowment.

Little localised powers, and little narrow streaks of specialised knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise ; but for this encouraging principle, how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected ! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean ; it keeps it sweet, and renders it endurable. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the sea-fowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him, and the wave in which he dips. When one has had *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost *all* his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more.

"So you admire conceited people, do you?" said the young lady who has come to the city to be finished off for—the duties of life.

I am afraid you do not study logic at your school, my dear. It does not follow that I wish to be pickled in brine because I like a salt-water plunge at Nahant. I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a centre is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such small circles that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to deter-

mine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not sensibly differ from a straight line. Even if it have the third vowel as its centre, it does not soon betray it. The highest thought, that is, is the most seemingly impersonal ; it does not obviously imply any individual centre.

Audacious self-esteem, with good ground for it, is always imposing. What resplendent beauty that must have been which could have authorised Phryne to "peel" in the way she did ! What fine speeches are those two : "*Non omnis moriar*," and "I have taken all knowledge to be my province" ! Even in common people, conceit has the virtue of making them cheerful ; the man who thinks his wife, his baby, his house, his horse, his dog, and himself severally unequalled, is almost sure to be a good-humoured person, though liable to be tedious at times.

What are the great faults of conversation ? Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, but I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else—long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend. No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain *ultima* of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition of profitable talk between two persons. Talking is like playing on the harp ; there is as much in laying the hand on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.

Do you mean to say the pun-question is not clearly settled in your minds ? Let me lay down the law upon the subject. Life and language are alike sacred. Homicide and *verbicide*—that is, violent treatment of a word, with fatal results to its legitimate meaning, which is its life—are alike forbidden. Man-slaughter, which is the meaning of the one, is the same as man's laughter, which is the end of the other. A pun is *prima facie* an insult to the person you are talking with. It implies utter indifference to or sublime contempt for his remarks, no matter how serious. I speak of total depravity, and one says all that is written on the subject is deep raving. I have committed my self-respect by talking with such a person. I should like to commit him, but cannot, because he is a nuisance. Or I speak of geological convulsions, and he asks me what was the cosine of Noah's Ark ; also, whether the Deluge was not a deal huger than any modern inundation.

A pun does not commonly justify a blow in return. But if a blow were given for such cause, and death ensued, the jury would be judges both of the facts and of the pun, and might, if

the latter were of an aggravated character, return a verdict of justifiable homicide. Thus, in a case lately decided before Miller, J., Doe presented Roe a subscription paper, and urged the claims of suffering humanity. Roe replied by asking, When charity was like a top? It was in evidence that Doe preserved a dignified silence. Roe then said, "When it begins to hum." Doe then—and not till then—struck Roe, and his head happening to hit a bound volume of the *Monthly Rag-Bag and Stolen Miscellany*, intense mortification ensued, with a fatal result. The chief laid down his notions of the law to his brother justices, who unanimously replied, "Jest so." The chief rejoined, that no man should jest so without being punished for it, and charged for the prisoner, who was acquitted, and the pun ordered to be burned by the sheriff. The bound volume was forfeited as a deodand, but not claimed. People that make puns are like wanton boys that put coppers on the railroad-tracks. They amuse themselves and other children, but their little trick may upset a freight train of conversation for the sake of a battered witticism.

I will thank you, B. F., to bring down two books, of which I will mark the places on this slip of paper. (While he is gone, I may say that this boy, our landlady's youngest, is called BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, after the celebrated philosopher of that name. A highly merited compliment.)

I wished to refer to two eminent authorities. Now be so good as to listen. The great moralist says: "To trifle with the vocabulary which is the vehicle of social intercourse is to tamper with the currency of human intelligence. He who would violate the sanctities of his mother-tongue would invade the recesses of the paternal till without remorse, and repeat the banquet of Saturn without an indigestion."

And, once more, listen to the historian. "The Puritans hated puns. The Bishops were notoriously addicted to them. The Lords Temporal carried them to the verge of licence. Majesty itself must have its royal quibble. 'Ye be burly, my Lord of Burleigh,' said Queen Elizabeth, 'but ye shall make less stir in our realm than my Lord of Leicester.' The gravest wisdom and the highest breeding lent their sanction to the practice. Lord Bacon playfully declared himself a descendant of 'Og, the King of Bashan. Sir Philip Sidney, with his last breath, reproached the soldier who brought him water, for wasting a caskful upon a dying man. A courtier, who saw *Othello* performed at the Globe Theatre, remarked, that the blackamoor was a brute, and not a man. 'Thou hast reason,' replied a great lord, 'according to Plato his saying; for this be a two-legged animal *with* feathers.' The fatal habit became universal. The language was corrupted. The infection spread to the national conscience. Political double-dealings naturally grew out of verbal double-meanings. The teeth of the new dragon were sown by the Cadmus who



introduced the alphabet of equivocation. What was levity in the time of the Tudors grew to regicide and revolution in the age of the Stuarts."

Who was that boarder that just whispered something about the Macaulay-flowers of literature?—There was a dead silence. —I said calmly, I shall henceforth consider any interruption by a pun as a hint to change my boarding-house. Do not plead my example. If *I* have used any such, it has been only as a Spartan father would show up a drunken helot. We have done with them.

If a logical mind ever found out any thing with its logic? I should say that its most frequent work was to build a *pons asinorum* over chasms which shrewd people can bestride without such a structure. You can hire logic in the shape of a lawyer, to prove any thing that you want to prove. You can buy treatises to show that Napoleon never lived, and that no battle of Bunker-hill was ever fought. The great minds are those with a wide span which couple truths related to, but far removed from, each other. Logicians carry the surveyor's chain over the track of which these are the true explorers. I value a man mainly for his primary relations with truth, as I understand truth—not for any secondary artifice in handling his ideas. Some of the sharpest men in argument are notoriously unsound in judgment. I should not trust the counsel of a smart debater, any more than that of a good chess-player. Either may, of course, advise wisely, but not necessarily because he wrangles or plays well.

The old gentleman who sits opposite got his hand up, as a pointer lifts his forefoot, at the expression, "his relations with truth, as I understand truth," and when I had done, sniffed audibly, and said I talked like a transcendentalist; for his part, common sense was good enough for him.

Precisely so, my dear sir, I replied; common sense, *as you understand it*. We all have to assume a standard of judgment in our own minds, either of things or persons. A man who is willing to take another's opinion has to exercise his judgment in the choice of whom to follow, which is often as nice a matter as to judge of things for one's self. On the whole, I had rather judge men's minds by comparing their thoughts with my own, than judge of thoughts by knowing who utter them. I must do one or the other. It does not follow, of course, that I may not recognise another man's thoughts as broader and deeper than my own, but that does not necessarily change my opinion, otherwise this would be at the mercy of every superior mind that held a different one. How many of our most cherished beliefs are like those drinking-glasses of the ancient pattern, that serve us well so long as we keep them in our hand, but spill all if we attempt to set them down! I have sometimes compared conversation to the Italian game of *mora*, in which one player lifts his hand

with so many fingers extended, and the other gives the number if he can. I show my thought, another his ; if they agree, well ; if they differ, we find the largest common factor, if we can, but at any rate avoid disputing about remainders and fractions, which is to real talk what tuning an instrument is to playing on it.

What if, instead of talking this morning, I should read you a copy of verses, with critical remarks by the author ? Any of the company can retire that like.

#### ALBUM VERSES.

When Eve had led her lord away,  
And Cain had killed his brother,  
The stars and flowers, the poets say,  
Agreed with one another  
To cheat the cunning tempter's art,  
And teach the race its duty,  
By keeping on its wicked heart  
Their eyes of light and beauty.  
A million sleepless lids, they say,  
Will be at least a warning ;  
And so the flowers would watch by day,  
The stars from eve to morning.  
On hill and prairie, field and lawn,  
Their dewy eyes upturning,  
The flowers still watch from reddening dawn  
Till western skies are burning.  
Alas ! each hour of daylight tells  
A tale of shame so crushing,  
That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,  
And some are always blushing.  
But when the patient stars look down  
On all their light discovers—  
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,  
The lips of lying lovers—  
They try to shut their saddening eyes,  
And in the vain endeavour  
We see them twinkling in the skies,  
And so they wink for ever.

What do *you* think of these verses, my friends ?—Is that piece an impromptu ? said my landlady's daughter. (Æt. 19+. Tender-eyed blonde. Long ringlets. Cameo pin. Gold pencil-case on a chain. Locket. Bracelet. Album. Autograph book. Accordion. Reads Byron, Tupper, and Sylvanus Cobb, junior, while her mother makes the puddings. Says, "Yes?" when you tell her anything.)—*Oui et non, ma petite*—Yes and no, my child. Five of the seven verses were written off-hand ; the other two took a week—that is, were hanging round the desk in a ragged, forlorn, unrhymed condition as long as that. All poets will tell you just such stories. *C'est le DERNIER pas qui coûte*. Don't you know how hard it is for some people to get out of a room after their visit is really over ? They want to be off, as you want to have them off, but they don't know how to manage it. One

would think they had been built in your parlour or study, and were waiting to be launched. I have contrived a sort of ceremonial inclined plane for such visitors, which being lubricated with certain smooth phrases, I back them down, metaphorically speaking, stern-foremost, into their "native element," the great ocean of out-doors. Well, now, there are poems as hard to get rid of as these rural visitors. They come in glibly, use up all the serviceable rhymes—*day, ray; beauty, duty; skies, eyes; other, brother; mountain, fountain*, and the like; and so they go on until you think it is time for the wind-up, and the wind-up won't come on any terms. So they lie about until you get sick of the sight of them, and end by thrusting some old scrap of a final couplet upon them, and turning them out of doors. I suspect a good many "impromptus" could tell just such a story as the above. Here turning to our landlady, I used an illustration which pleased the company much at the time, and has since been highly commended. "Madam," I said, "you can pour three gills and three-quarters of honey from that pint jug, if it is full, in less than one minute; but, madam, you could not empty that last quarter of a gill, though you were turned into a marble Hebe, and held the vessel upside down for a thousand years."

One gets tired to death of the old, old rhymes, such as you see in that copy of verses—which I don't mean to abuse, or to praise either. I always feel as if I were a cobbler, putting new top-leathers to an old pair of boot-soles and bodies when I am fitting sentiments to these venerable jingles.

-	-	-	-	-	-	youth
-	-	-	-	-	-	morning
-	-	-	-	-	-	truth
-	-	-	-	-	-	warning

Nine-tenths of the "Juvenile Poems" written spring out of the above musical and suggestive coincidences.

"Yes?" said our landlady's daughter.

I did not address the following remark to her, and I trust, from her limited range of reading, she will never see it; I said it softly to my next neighbour.

When a young female wears a flat circular side-curl, gummed on each temple; when she walks with a male, not arm-in-arm, but his arm against the back of hers; and when she says "Yes?" with the note of interrogation, you are generally safe in asking her what wages she gets, and who the "feller" was you saw her with.

"What were you whispering?" said the daughter of the house, moistening her lips, as she spoke, in a very engaging manner.

"I was only laying down a principle of social diagnosis."

"Yes?"—

It is curious to see how the same wants and tastes find the same implements and modes of expression in all times and places. The young ladies of Otaheite, as you may see in *Cooke's*

*Voyages*, had a sort of crinoline arrangement fully equal in radius to the largest spread of our own lady-baskets. When I fling a Bay-State shawl over my shoulders, I am only taking a lesson from the climate that the Indian had learned before me. A *blanket*-shawl we call it, and not a plaid ; and we wear it like the aborigines, and not like the Highlanders.

We are the Romans of the modern world, the great assimilating people. Conflicts and conquests are, of course, necessary accidents with us, as with our prototypes. And so we come to their style of weapon. Our army sword is the short, stiff, pointed *gladius* of the Romans ; and the American bowie-knife is the same tool, modified to meet the daily wants of civil society. I announce at this table an axiom not to be found in Montesquieu or the Journals of Congress :—

The race that shortens its weapons lengthens its boundaries.

*Corollary.* It was the Polish *lance* that left Poland at last with nothing of her own to bound :—

“Dropped from her nerveless grasp the *shattered spear* !”

What business had Sarmatia to be fighting for liberty with a fifteen-foot pole between her and the breasts of her enemies ? If she had but clutched the old Roman and young American weapon, and come to close quarters, there might have been a chance for her ; but it would have spoiled the best passage in the *Pleasures of Hope*.

Self-made men ? Well, yes. Of course everybody likes and respects self-made men. It is a great deal better to be made in that way than not to be made at all. Are any of you younger people old enough to remember that Irishman's house on the marsh at Cambridgeport, which house he built from drain to chimney-top with his own hands ? It took him a good many years to build it, and one could see that it was a little out of plumb, and a little wavy in outline, and a little queer and uncertain in general aspect. A regular hand could certainly have built a better house ; but it was a very good house for a “self-made” carpenter's house, and people praised it, and said how remarkably well the Irishman had succeeded. They never thought of praising the fine blocks of houses a little farther on.

Your self-made man, whittled into shape with his own jack-knife, deserves more credit, if that is all, than the regular engine-turned article, shaped by the most approved pattern, and French-polished by society and travel. But as to saying that one is every way the equal of the other, that is another matter. The right of strict social discrimination of all things and persons, according to their merits, native or acquired, is one of the most precious republican privileges. I take the liberty to exercise it when I say that, *other things being equal*, in most relations of life I prefer a man of family.

What do I mean by a man of family ? Oh, I'll give you a

general idea of what I mean. Let us give him a first-rate fit-out ; it costs us nothing.

Four or five generations of gentlemen and gentlewomen ; among them a member of his Majesty's Council for the Province, a Governor or so, one or two Doctors of Divinity, a member of Congress, not later than the time of top-boots with tassels.

Family portraits. The member of the Council, by Smibert. The great merchant-uncle, by Copley, full-length, sitting in his arm-chair, in a velvet cap and flowered robe, with a globe by him to show the range of his commercial transactions, and letters with large red seals lying round, one directed conspicuously to The Honourable, etc., etc. Great-grandmother, by the same artist ; brown satin, lace very fine, hands superlative ; grand old lady, stiffish, but imposing. Her mother, artist unknown : flat, angular, hanging sleeves ; parrot on fist. A pair of Stuarts—viz : 1. A superb, full-blown, medieval gentleman, with a fiery dash of Tory blood in his veins, tempered down with that of a fine old rebel grandmother, and warmed up with the best old India Madeira ; his face is one flame of ruddy sunshine ; his ruffled shirt rushes out of his bosom with an impetuous generosity, as if it would drag his heart after it ; and his smile is good for twenty thousand dollars to the hospital, besides ample bequests to all relatives and dependents. 2. Lady of the same ; remarkable cap ; high waist, as in time of Empire ; bust *à la Josephine* ; wisps of curls, like celery-tips, at sides of forehead ; complexion clear and warm, like rose-cordial. As for the miniatures by Malbone, we don't count them in the gallery.

Books, too, with the names of old college students in them,—family names ; you will find them at the head of their respective classes in the days when students took rank on the catalogue from their parents' condition. Elzevirs, with the Latinised appellations of youthful progenitors, and *Hic liber est meus* on the title-page ; a set of Hogarth's original plates ; Pope, original edition, 15 volumes, London, 1717 ; Barrow, on the lower shelves, in folio ; Tillotson, on the upper, in a little dark platoon of octodecimos. Some family silver ; a string of wedding and funeral rings ; the arms of the family curiously blazoned ; the same in worsted, by a maiden aunt.

If the man of family has an old place to keep these things in, furnished with claw-footed chairs and black-mahogany tables, and tall bevel-edged mirrors, and stately upright cabinets, his outfit is complete.

No, my friends, I go—always, other things being equal—for the man who inherits family traditions and the cumulative humanities of at least four or five generations. Above all things, as a child, he should have tumbled about in a library. All men are afraid of books who have not handled them from infancy. Do you suppose our dear *didascalos*, over there, ever read *Poë's Synopsis*, or consulted *Castelli's Lexicon*, while he was growing

up to their stature? Not he; but virtue passed through the hem of their parchment and leather garments whenever he touched them, as the precious drugs sweated through the bat's handle in the Arabian story. I tell you he is at home wherever he smells the invigorating fragrance of Russia leather. No self-made man feels so. One may, it is true, have all the antecedents I have spoken of, and yet be a boor or a shabby fellow. One may have none of them, and yet be fit for councils and courts. Then let them change places. Our social arrangement has this great beauty, that its strata shift up and down as they change specific gravity, without being clogged by layers of prescription. But I still insist on my democratic liberty of choice, and I go for the man with the gallery of family portraits against the one with the twenty-five-cent daguerrotype, unless I find out that the last is the better of the two.—

I should have felt more nervous about the late comet if I had thought the world was ripe. But it is very green yet, if I am not mistaken; and besides, there is a great deal of coal to use up, which I cannot bring myself to think was made for nothing. If certain things—which seem to me essential to a millennium—had come to pass, I should have been frightened, but they haven't. Perhaps you would like to hear my

#### LATTER-DAY WARNINGS.

When legislators keep the law,  
 When banks dispense with bolts and locks,  
 When berries, whortle-, rasp-, and straw-,  
 Grow bigger *downwards* through the box;  
 When he that selleth house or land  
 Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,  
 When haberdashers choose the stand  
 Whose window hath the broadest light;  
 When preachers tell us all they think,  
 And party leaders all they mean,  
 When what we pay for, that we drink,  
 From real grape and coffee-bean;  
 When lawyers take what they would give,  
 And doctors give what they would take,  
 When city fathers eat to live,  
 Save when they fast for conscience' sake;  
 When one that hath a horse on sale  
 Shall bring his merit to the proof,  
 Without a lie for every nail  
 That holds the iron on the hoof;  
 When in the usual place for rips  
 Our gloves are stitched with special care,  
 And guarded well the whalebone tips  
 Where first umbrellas need repair;  
 When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot  
 The power of suction to resist,  
 And claret-bottles harbour not  
 Such dimples as would hold your fist;



When publishers no longer steal,  
 And pay for what they stole before;  
 When the first locomotive's wheel  
 Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore,—  
 Till then let Cumming blaze away,  
 And Miller's saints blow up the globe:  
 But when you see that blessed day,  
 Then order your ascension robe!

The company seemed to like the verses, and I promised them to read others occasionally, if they had a mind to hear them. Of course they would not expect it every morning. Neither must the reader suppose that all these things I have reported were said at any one breakfast-time. I have not taken the trouble to date them, as Raspail *père* used to date every proof he sent to the printer; but they were scattered over several breakfasts; and I have said a good many more things since, which I shall very possibly print some time or other, if I am urged to do it by judicious friends.

I finished off with reading some verses of my friend the Professor, of whom you may perhaps hear more by and by. The Professor read them, he told me, at a farewell meeting, where the youngest of our great historians met a few of his many friends at their invitation:

Yes, we knew we must lose him; though friendship may claim  
 To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame;  
 Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,  
 'Tis the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.  
 As the rider that rests with the spur on his heel,  
 As the guardsman that sleeps in his corslet of steel,  
 As the archer that stands with his shaft on the string,  
 He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring.  
 What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom,  
 Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties shall bloom,  
 While tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes  
 That caught from our sunsets the stain of their skies!  
 In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,  
 Where flit the gaunt spectres of passion and crime,  
 There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs unsung,  
 There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue!  
 Let us hear the proud story which time has bequeathed,  
 From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed;  
 Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their doom,  
 Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp with his broom!

\* \* \* \* \*

The dream flashes by, for the west winds awake  
 On pampas, on prairie, o'er mountain and lake,  
 To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine  
 With incense they stole from the rose and the pine.  
 So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed  
 When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and crushed;  
 THE TRUE KNIGHT OF LEARNING—the world holds him dear—  
 Love bless him, Joy crown him, God speed his career!

## II.

I REALLY believe some people save their bright thoughts as being too precious for conversation. What do you think an admiring friend said the other day to one that was talking good things,—good enough to print? “Why,” said he, “you are wasting merchantable literature—a cash article—at the rate, as nearly as I can tell, of fifty dollars an hour.” The talker took him to the window, and asked him to look out and tell what he saw.

“Nothing but a very dusty street,” he said, “and a man driving a sprinkling-machine through it.”

“Why don’t you tell the man he is wasting that water? What would be the state of the highways of life if we did not drive our *thought-sprinklers* through them, with the valves open sometimes? Besides, there is another thing about this talking, which you forget. It shapes our thoughts for us; the waves of conversation roll them as the surf rolls the pebbles on the shore. Let me modify the image a little. I rough-out my thoughts in talk as an artist models in clay. Spoken language is so plastic,—you can pat, and coax, and spread, and shave, and rub out, and fill up, and stick on so easily, when you work that soft material, that there is nothing like it for modelling. Out of it come the shapes which you turn into marble or bronze in your immortal books, if you happen to write such. Or, to use another illustration, writing or printing is like shooting with a rifle; you may hit your reader’s mind or miss it. But talking is like playing at a mark with the pipe of an engine; if it is within reach, and you have time enough, you can’t help hitting it.”

The company agreed that this last illustration was of superior excellence; or, in the phrase used by them, “Fust-rate.” I acknowledged the compliment, but gently rebuked the expression. “Fust-rate,” “prime,” “a prime article,” “a superior piece of goods,” “a handsome garment,” “a gent in a flowered vest,”—all such expressions are final. They blast the lineage of him or her who utters them, for generations up and down. There is one other phrase which will soon come to be decisive of a man’s social status, if it is not already,—“That tells the whole story.” It is an expression which vulgar and conceited people particularly affect, and which well-meaning ones, who know better, catch from them. It is intended to stop all debate, like the previous question in the General Court. Only it doesn’t; simply because “that” does not usually tell the whole, nor one-half of the whole story.—

It is an odd idea, that almost all our people have had a professional education. To become a doctor, a man must study some three years, and hear a thousand lectures, more or less. Just how much study it takes to make a lawyer I cannot say, but probably not more than this. Now, most decent people hear one

hundred lectures or sermons—discourses—on theology every year ; and this, twenty, thirty, fifty years together. They read a great many religious books besides. The clergy, however, rarely hear any sermons except what they preach themselves. A dull preacher might be conceived, therefore, to lapse into a state of *quasi* heathenism, simply for want of religious instruction. And, on the other hand, an attentive and intelligent hearer, listening to a succession of wise teachers, might become actually better educated in theology than any one of them. We are all theological students, and more of us qualified as doctors of divinity than have received degrees at any of the universities.

It is not strange, therefore, that very good people should often find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep their attention fixed upon a sermon, treating feebly a subject which they have thought vigorously about for years, and heard able men discuss scores of times. I have often noticed, however, that a hopeless dull discourse acts *inductively*—as electricians would say—in developing strong mental currents. I am ashamed to think with what accompaniments and variations and *fioriture* I have sometimes followed the droning of a heavy speaker, not willingly—for my habit is reverential—but as a necessary result of a slight continuous impression on the senses and mind, which kept both in action without furnishing the food they required to work upon. If you ever saw a crow with a king-bird after him, you will get an image of a dull speaker and a lively listener. The bird in able plumage flaps heavily along his straightforward course, while the other sails round him, over him, under him, leaves him, comes back again, tweaks out a black feather, shoots away once more, never losing sight of him, and finally reaches the crow's perch at the same time as the crow does, having cut a perfect labyrinth of loops and knots and spirals while the slow fowl was painfully working from one end of his straight line to the other.

[I think these remarks were received rather coolly. A temporary boarder from the country—consisting of a somewhat more than middle-aged female, with a parchment forehead and a dry little “frisette” shingling it, a sallow neck with a necklace of gold beads, a black dress too rusty for recent grief, and contours in basso-relievo—left the table prematurely, and was reported to have been very virulent about what I said. So I went to my good old minister, and repeated the remarks, as nearly as I could remember them, to him. He laughed good-naturedly, and said there was considerable truth in them. He thought he could tell when people's minds were wandering by their looks. In the earlier years of his ministry he had sometimes noticed this when he was preaching,—very little of late years. Sometimes, when his colleague was preaching, he observed this kind of inattention ; but, after all, it was not so very unnatural. I will say, by the way, that it is a rule I have long followed, to tell my worst

thoughts to my minister, and my best thoughts to the young people I talk with.}—

I want to make a literary confession now, which I believe nobody has made before me. You know very well that I write verses sometimes, because I have read some of them at this table. (The company assented; two or three of them in a resigned sort of way, as I thought, as if they supposed I had an epic in my pocket, and was going to read half a dozen books or so for their benefit.)—I continued. Of course I write some lines or passages which are better than others: some which, compared with the others, might be called relatively excellent. It is in the nature of things that I should consider these relatively excellent lines or passages as absolutely good. So much must be pardoned to humanity. Now, I never wrote a “good” line in my life, but the moment after it was written it seemed a hundred years old. Very commonly I had a sudden conviction that I had seen it somewhere. Possibly I may have sometimes unconsciously stolen it, but I do not remember that I ever once detected any historical truth in these sudden convictions of the antiquity of my new thought or phrase. I have learned utterly to distrust them, and never allow them to bully me out of a thought or line.

This is the philosophy of it. (Here the number of the company was diminished by a small secession.) Any new formula which suddenly emerges in our consciousness has its roots in long trains of thought; it is virtually old when it first makes its appearance among the recognised growths of our intellect. Any crystalline group of musical words has had a long and still period to form in. Here is one theory.

But there is a larger law which perhaps comprehends these facts. It is this. The rapidity with which ideas grow old in our memories is in a direct ratio to the squares of their importance. Their apparent age runs up miraculously, like the value of diamonds, as they increase in magnitude. A great calamity, for instance, is as old as the trilobites an hour after it has happened. It stains backward through all the leaves we have turned over in the book of life, before its blot of tears or of blood is dry on the page we are turning. For this we seem to have lived; it was foreshadowed in dreams that we leaped out of in the cold sweat of terror, in the “dissolving views” of dark day-visions: all omens pointed to it, all paths led to it. After the tossing half-forgetfulness of the first sleep that follows such an event, it comes upon us afresh, as a surprise, at waking; in a few moments it is old again,—old as eternity.

[I wish I had not said all this then and there. I might have known better. The pale schoolmistress, in her mourning dress, was looking at me, as I noticed, with a wild sort of expression. All at once the blood dropped out of her cheeks as the mercury drops from a broken barometer-tube, and she melted away from

her seat like an image of snow ; a slug-shot could not have brought her down better. God forgive me !

After this little episode, I continued, to some few that remained balancing teaspoons on the edges of cups, twirling knives, or tilting upon the hind legs of their chairs until their heads reached the wall, where they left gratuitous advertisements of various popular cosmetics.]

When a person is suddenly thrust into any strange, new position of trial, he finds the place fits him as if he had been measured for it. He has committed a great crime, for instance, and is sent to the State Prison. The traditions, prescriptions, limitations, privileges, all the sharp conditions of his new life, stamp themselves upon his consciousness as the signet on soft wax ;—a single pressure is enough. Let me strengthen the image a little. Did you ever happen to see that most soft-spoken and velvet-handed steam-engine at the Mint ? The smooth piston slides backward and forward as a lady might slip her delicate finger in and out of a ring. The engine lays one of *its* fingers calmly, but firmly, upon a bit of metal ; it is a coin now, and will remember that touch, and tell a new race about it, when the date upon it is crusted over with twenty centuries. So it is that a great silent-moving misery puts a new stamp on us in an hour or a moment,—as sharp an impression as if it had taken half a lifetime to engrave it.

It is awful to be in the hands of the wholesale professional dealers in misfortune ; undertakers and gaolers magnetise you in a moment, and you pass out of the individual life you were living into the rythmical movements of their horrible machinery. Do the worst thing you can, or suffer the worst that can be thought of, you find yourself in a category of humanity that stretches back as far as Cain, and with an expert at your elbow who has studied your case all out beforehand, and is waiting for you with his implements of hemp or mahogany. I believe, if a man were to be buried in any of our cities to-morrow for heresy, there would be found a master of ceremonies that knew just how many fagots were necessary, and the best way of arranging the whole matter.

So we have not won the Goodwood Cup ; *au contraire*, we were a "bad fifth," if not worse than that ; and trying it again, and the third time, has not yet bettered the matter. Now I am as patriotic as any of my fellow-citizens—too patriotic, in fact, for I have got into hot water by loving too much of my country ; in short, if any man whose fighting weight is not more than eight stone four pounds, disputes it, I am ready to discuss the point with him. I should have gloried to see the stars and stripes in front at the finish. I love my country, and I love horses. Stubbs's old mezzotint of Eclipse hangs over my desk, and Herring's portion of Plenipotentiary—whom I saw run at Epsom—over my fireplace. Did I not elope from school to see Revenge, and Prospect, and Little John, and Peacemaker run over the race-

course where now yon suburban village flourishes, in the year eighteen hundred and ever-so-few? Though I never owned a horse, have I not been the proprietor of six equine females, of which one was the prettiest little "Morgin" that ever stepped? Listen, then, to an opinion I have often expressed long before this venture of ours in England. Horse-racing is not a republican institution; horse-trotting is. Only very rich persons can keep race-horses, and everybody knows they are kept mainly as gambling implements. All that matter about blood and speed we won't discuss; we understand all that; useful, very—of course—great obligations to the Godolphin "Arabian," and the rest. I say racing horses are essentially gambling implements, as much as roulette-tables. Now, I am not preaching at this moment: I may read you one of my sermons some other morning; but I maintain that gambling, on the great scale, is not republican. It belongs to two phases of society—a cankered over-civilisation, such as exists in rich aristocracies, and the reckless life of borderers and adventurers, or the semi-barbarism of a civilisation resolved into its primitive elements. Real Republicanism is stern and severe; its essence is not in forms of government, but in the omnipotence of public opinion, which grows out of it. This public opinion cannot prevent gambling with dice or stocks, but it can and does compel it to keep comparatively quiet. But horse-racing is the most public way of gambling, and with all its immense attractions to the sense and the feelings—to which I plead very susceptible—the disguise is too thin that covers it, and everybody knows what it means. Its supporters are the Southern gentry—fine fellows, no doubt, but not republicans exactly, as we understand the term—a few Northern millionaires, more or less thoroughly millioned, who do not represent the real people, and the mob of sporting men, the best of whom are commonly idlers, and the worst very bad neighbours to have near one in a crowd, or to meet in a dark alley. In England, on the other hand, with its aristocratic institutions, racing is a natural growth enough; the passion for it spreads downwards through all classes, from the Queen to the costermonger. London is like a shelled corn-cob on the Derby day, and there is not a clerk who could raise the money to hire a saddle with an old hack under it that can sit down on his office-stool the next day without wincing.

Now just compare the racer with the trotter for a moment. The racer is incidentally useful, but essentially something to bet upon, as much as the thimblerrigger's "little joker." The trotter is essentially and daily useful, and only incidentally a tool for sporting men.

What better reason do you want for the fact that the racer is most cultivated and reaches his greatest perfection in England, and that the trotting horses of America beat the world? And why should we have expected that the pick—if it was the pick—

of our few and far-between racing stables should beat the pick of England and France? Throw over the fallacious time-test, and there was nothing to show for it but a natural kind of patriotic feeling, which we all have, with a thoroughly provincial conceit, which some of us must plead guilty to.

We may beat yet. As an American, I hope we shall. As a moralist and occasional sermoniser, I am not so anxious about it. Wherever the trotting horse goes, he carries in his train brisk omnibuses, lively bakers' carts—and therefore hot rolls, the jolly butcher's wagon, the cheerful gig, the wholesome afternoon drive with wife and child—all the forms of moral excellence, except truth, which does not agree with any kind of horseflesh. The racer brings with him gambling, cursing, swearing, drinking, the eating of oysters, and a distaste for mob-caps and the middle-aged virtues.

And, by the way, let me beg you not to call a *trotting-match* a *race*, and not to speak of a "thorough-bred" as a "*blooded*" horse, unless he has been recently phlebotomised. I consent to your saying "blood horse," if you like. Also, if, next year, we send our Posterior and Posterioress, the winners of the great national four-mile race in 7 18½, and they happen to get beaten, pay your bets, and behave like men and gentlemen about it, if you know how.

[I felt a great deal better after blowing off the ill-temper condensed in the above paragraph. To brag little, to show well, to crow gently if in luck, to pay up, to own up, and to shut up, if beaten, are the virtues of a sporting man; and I can't say that I think we have shown them in any great perfection of late.]—

Apropos of horses. Do you know how important good jockeying is to authors? Judicious management; letting the public see your animal just enough, and not too much; holding him up hard when the market is too full of him; letting him out at just the right buying intervals; always gently feeling his mouth; never slacking and never jerking the rein: this is what I mean by jockeying.

When an author has a number of books out, a cunning hand will keep them all spinning, as Signor Blitz does his dinner-plates; fetching each one up, as it begins to "wabble," by an advertisement, a puff, or a quotation.

Whenever the extracts from a living writer begin to multiply fast in the papers, without obvious reason, there is a new book or a new edition coming. The extracts are *ground-bait*.

Literary life is full of curious phenomena. I don't know that there is anything more noticeable than what we may call *conventional reputations*. There is a tacit understanding in every community of men of letters that they will not disturb the popular fallacy respecting this or that electro-gilded celebrity. There are various reasons for this forbearance: one is old; one is rich; ~~one~~ one is goodnatured; one is such a favourite with the pit that it.



would not be safe to hiss him from the manager's box. The venerable augurs of the literary or scientific temple may smile faintly when one of the tribe is mentioned ; but the farce is in general kept up as well as the Chinese comic scene of entreating and imploring a man to stay with you, with the implied compact between you that he shall by no means think of doing it. A poor wretch he must be who would wantonly sit down on one of these bandbox reputations. A Prince-Rupert's-drop, which is a tear of unannealed glass, lasts indefinitely, if you keep it from meddling hands ; but break its tail off, and it explodes and resolves itself into powder. These celebrities I speak of are the Prince-Rupert's-drops of the learned and polite world. See how the papers treat them ! What an array of pleasant kaleidoscopic phrases, which can be arranged in ever so many charming patterns, is at their service ! How kind the "Critical Notices"—where small authorship comes to pick up chips of praise, fragrant, sugary, and sappy—always are to them ! Well, life would be nothing without paper-credit and other fictions ; so let them pass current. Don't steal their chips ; don't puncture their swimming-bladders ; don't come down on their pasteboard boxes ; don't break the ends of their brittle and unstable reputations, you fellows who all feel sure that your names will be household words a thousand years from now.

"A thousand years is a good while," said the old gentleman who sits opposite, thoughtfully.—

Where have I been for the last three or four days ? Down at the Island, deer-shooting.—How many did I bag ? I brought home one buck-shot.—The Island is where ? No matter. It is the most splendid domain that any man looks upon in these latitudes. Blue sea around it, and running up into its heart, so that the little boat slumbers like a baby in lap, while the tall ships are stripping naked to fight the hurricane outside, and storm-stay-sails banging and flying in ribbons. Trees, in stretches of miles ; beeches, oaks, most numerous ;—many of them hung with moss, looking like bearded Druids ; some coiled in the clasp of huge, dark-stemmed grape-vines. Open patches where the sun gets in and goes to sleep, and the winds come so finely sifted that they are as soft as swan's down. Rocks scattered about,—Stonehenge-like monoliths. Fresh-water lakes ; one of them, Mary's lake, crystal-clear, full of flashing pickerel lying under the lily-pads like tigers in the jungle. Six pounds of ditto killed one morning for breakfast. *EGO fecit.*

The divinity-student looked as if he would like to question my Latin. No, sir, I said,—you need not trouble yourself. There is a higher law in grammar, not to be put down by Andrews and Stoddard. Then I went on.

Such hospitality as that Island has seen there has ~~not~~ been the like of in these our New-England sovereignties. There is nothing in the shape of kindness and courtesy that can make



life beautiful, which has not found its home in that ocean-principality. It has welcomed all who were worthy of welcome, from the pale clergyman who came to breathe the sea-air with its medicinal salt and iodine, to the great statesman who turned his back on the affairs of empire, and smoothed his Olympian forehead, and flashed his white teeth in merriment over the long table, where his wit was the keenest and his story the best.

[I don't believe any man ever talked like that in this world. I don't believe *I* talked just so; but the fact is, in reporting one's conversation, one cannot help *Blair-ing* it up more or less, ironing out crumpled paragraphs, starching limp ones, and crimping and plaiting a little sometimes; it is as natural as prinking at the looking-glass.]—

How can a man help writing poetry in such a place? Every body does write poetry that goes there. In the state archives, kept in the library of the Lord of the Isle, are whole volumes of unpublished verse,—some by well-known hands, and others, quite as good, by the last people you would think of as versifiers,—men who could pension off all the genuine poets in the country, and buy ten acres of Boston common, if it was for sale, with what they had left. Of course I had to write my little copy of verses with the rest; here it is, if you will hear me read it. When the sun is in the west, vessels sailing in an easterly direction look bright or dark to one who observes them from the north or south, according to the tack they are sailing upon. Watching them from one of the windows of the great mansion, I saw these perpetual changes, and moralised thus:

#### SUN AND SHADOW.

As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,  
 To the billows of foam-crested blue,  
 Yon bark that afar in the distance is seen,  
 Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue:  
 Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray  
 As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;  
 Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,  
 The sun gleaming bright on her sail.  
 Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,—  
 Of breakers that whiten and roar;  
 How little he cares, if in shadow or sun  
 They see him that gaze from the shore!  
 He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,  
 To the rock that is under his lee,  
 As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,  
 O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.  
 Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves  
 Where life and its ventures are laid,  
 The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves  
 May see us in sunshine or shade;  
 Yet true to our course, though our shadow grow dark,  
 We'll trim our broad sail as before,  
 And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,  
 Nor ask how we look from the shore!

Insanity is often the logic of an accurate mind overtaken. Good mental machinery ought to break its own wheels and levers, if any thing is thrust among them suddenly which tends to stop them or reverse their motion. A weak mind does not accumulate force enough to hurt itself; stupidity often saves a man from going mad. We frequently see persons in insane hospitals, sent there in consequence of what are called *religious* mental disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same notions, and keep their wits and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad, if he really holds such or such opinions. It is very much to his discredit in every point of view, if he does not. What is the use of my saying what some of these opinions are? Perhaps more than one of you hold such as I should think ought to send you straight over to Somerville, if you have any logic in your heads or any human feeling in your hearts. Any thing that is brutal, cruel, heathenish, that makes life hopeless for the most of mankind, and perhaps for entire races,—any thing that assumes the necessity of the extermination of instincts which were given to be regulated,—no matter by what name you call it,—no matter whether a fakir, or a monk, or a deacon believes it,—if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. That condition becomes a normal one, under the circumstances.† I am very much ashamed of some people for retaining their reason, when they know perfectly well that if they were not the most stupid or the most selfish of human beings, they would become *non-compotes* at once.

[Nobody understood this but the theological student and the schoolmistress. They looked intelligently at each other; but whether they were thinking about my paradox or not, I am not clear.—It would be natural enough. Stranger things have happened. Love and Death enter boarding-houses without asking the price of board, or whether there is room for them. Alas, these young people are poor and pallid! Love *should* be both rich and rosy, but *must* be either rich or rosy. Talk about military duty! What is that to the warfare of a married maid-of-all-work, with the title of mistress, and an American female constitution, which collapses just in the middle third of life, and comes out vulcanised India-rubber, if it happen to live through the period when health and strength are most wanted?]

Have I ever acted in private theatricals? Often. I have played the part of the "Poor Gentleman," before a great many audiences,—more, I trust, than I shall ever face again. I did not wear a stage-costume, nor a wig, nor mustaches of burnt cork; but I was placarded and announced as a public performer, and at the proper hour I came forward with the ballet-dancer's smile upon my countenance, and made my bow and acted my part. I have seen my name stuck up in letters so big that I was ashamed to show myself in the place by daylight. I have gone

to a town with a sober literary essay in my pocket, and seen myself every where announced as the most desperate of *buffos*,—one who was obliged to restrain himself in the full exercise of his powers, from prudential considerations. I have been through as many hardships as Ulysses, in the pursuit of my histrionic vocation. I have travelled in cars until the conductors all knew me like a brother. I have run off the rails, and stuck all night in snow-drifts, and sat behind females that would have the window open when one could not wink without his eyelids freezing together. Perhaps I shall give you some of my experiences one of these days;—I will not now, for I have something else for you.

Private theatricals, as I have figured in them in country lyceum-halls, are one thing—and private theatricals, as they may be seen in certain gilded and frescoed saloons of our metropolis, are another. Yes, it is pleasant to see real gentlemen and ladies, who do not think it necessary to mouth and rant and stride, like most of our stage heroes and heroines, in the characters which show off their graces and talents; most of all to see a fresh, unrouged, unspoiled, high-bred young maiden, with a lithe figure and a pleasant voice, acting in those love-dramas which make us young again to look upon, when real youth and beauty will play them for us.

Of course I wrote the prologue I was asked to write. I did not see the play, though. I knew there was a young lady in it, and that somebody was in love with her, and she was in love with him, and somebody (an old tutor, I believe) wanted to interfere, and, very naturally, the young lady was too sharp for him. The play of course ends charmingly; there is a general reconciliation, and all concerned form a line and take each other's hands, as people always do after they have made up their quarrels; and then the curtain falls, if it does not stick, as it commonly does at private theatrical exhibitions; in which case a boy is detailed to pull it down, which he does, blushing violently.

Now, then, for my prologue. I am not going to change my *cæsuras* and *cadences* for any body; so if you do not the heroic, or iambic trimeter brachy-catalectic, you had better not wait to hear it.

#### THIS IS IT.

A Prologue? Well, of course the ladies know;  
 I have my doubts. No matter—here we go!  
 What is a prologue? Let our Tutor teach:  
*Pro* means beforehand; *logos* stands for speech.  
 'Tis like the harper's prelude on the strings,  
 The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings;  
 Prologues in metre are to other *pros*  
 As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.  
 "The world's a stage," as Shakespeare said one day;  
 The stage a world—was what he meant to say.  
 The outside world's a blunder, that is clear;  
 The real world that Nature meant is here;

Here every foundling finds its lost mamma ;  
 Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa ;  
 Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,  
 The cheats are taken in the traps they laid ;  
 One after one the troubles all are past,  
 Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,  
 When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,  
 Join hands, so happy at the curtain's fall.  
 —Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,  
 And black-browed ruffians always come to grief,  
 —When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,  
 And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,  
 Cries, " Help, kyind Heaven !" and drops upou her knees  
 On the green—baize—beneath the (canvas) trees,—  
 See to her side avenging Valour fly—  
 " Ha ! Villain ! Draw ! Now, Terraitorr, yield or die !"   
 —When the poor hero flounders in despair,  
 Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,  
 Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,  
 Sobs on his neck, " *My boy!* MY BOY !! MY BOY !!!

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night,  
 Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.  
 Ladies, attend. While woful cares and doubt  
 Wrong the soft passion in the world without,  
 Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,  
 One thing is certain : Love will triumph here !  
 Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule—  
 The world's great masters, when you're out of school—  
 Learn the brief moral of our evening's play :  
 Man has his will, but woman has her way !  
 While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,  
 Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire ;  
 The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves  
 Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.  
 All earthly powers confess your sovereign art,  
 But that one rebel—woman's wilful heart.  
 All foes you master; but a woman's wit  
 Lets daylight through you ere you know you're hit.  
 So, just to picture what her art can do,  
 Hear an old story made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,  
 Alike was famous for his arm and blade.  
 One day a prisoner Justice had to kill  
 Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.  
 Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,  
 Rudolph the headsman rose above the crowd.  
 His falchion lightened with a sudden gleam,  
 As the pike's armour flashes in the stream.  
 He sheathed his blade ; he turned as if to go ;  
 The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.  
 " Why strikest not ? perform thy murderous act,"  
 The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)  
 " Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied ;  
 " Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."

He held his snuff-box—" Now then, if you please !"   
 The prisoner sniffed, and with a crashing sneeze,



The company said I had been shabbily treated, and advised me to charge the committee double—which I did. But as I never got my pay, I don't know that it made much difference. I am a very particular person about having all I write printed as I write it. I require to see a proof, a revise, a re-revise, and a double re-revise, or fourth proof rectified impression of all my productions, especially verse. A misprint kills a sensitive author. An intentional change of his text murders him. No wonder so many poets die young !

I have nothing more to report at this time, except two pieces of advice I gave to the young women at table. One relates to a vulgarism of language, which I grieve to say is sometimes heard even from female lips. The other is of more serious purport, and applies to such as contemplate a change of condition,—matrimony in fact.—

The woman who "calc'lates" is lost.—

Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust.

### III.

[THE "Atlantic" obeys the moon, and its LUNIVERSARY has come round again. I have gathered up some hasty notes of my remarks made since the last high tides, which I respectfully submit. Please to remember this is *talk*; just as easy and just as formal as I choose to make it.]—

I never saw an author in my life—saving, perhaps one—that did not purr as audibly as a full-grown domestic cat (*Felis Catus*, LINN.), on having his fur smoothed in the right way by a skilful hand.

But let me give you a caution. Be very careful how you tell an author he is *droll*. Ten to one he will hate you ; and if he does, be sure he can do you a mischief, and very probably will. Say you *cried* over his romance or his verses, and he will love you and send you a copy. You can laugh over that as much as you like—in private.

Wonder why authors and actors are ashamed of being funny ? —Why, there are obvious reasons, and deep philosophical ones. The clown knows very well that the women are not in love with him, but with Hamlet, the fellow in the black cloak and plumed hat. Passion never laughs. The wit knows that his place is at the tail of a procession.

If you want the deep underlying reason, I must take more time to tell it. There is a perfect consciousness in every form of wit,—using that term in its general sense,—that its essence consists in a partial and incomplete view of whatever it touches. It throws a single ray, separated from the rest,—red, yellow, blue, or any intermediate shade,—upon an object ; never white light ; that is the province of wisdom. We get beautiful effects from wit,—all the prismatic colours,—but never the object as it is in fair daylight. A pun, which is a kind of wit, is a different and

much shallower trick in mental optics ; throwing the *shadows* of two objects, so that one overlies the other. Poetry uses the rainbow tints for special effects, but always keeps its essential object in the purest white light of truth.—Will you allow me to pursue this subject a little further ?

[They didn't allow me at that time, for somebody happened to scrape the floor with his chair just then ; which accidental sound, as all must have noticed, has the instantaneous effect that the cutting of the yellow hair by Iris had upon *infelix* Dido. It broke the charm and that breakfast was over.]—

Don't flatter yourselves that friendship authorises you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into a relation with a person, the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies ; they are ready enough to tell them. Good-breeding *never* forgets that *amour-propre* is universal. When you read the story of the Archbishop and Gil Blas, you may laugh, if you will, at the poor old man's delusion ; but don't forget that the youth was the greater fool of the two, and that his master served such a booby rightly in turning him out of doors.—

You need not get up a rebellion against what I say, if you find every thing in my sayings is not exactly new. You can't possibly mistake a man who means to be honest for a literary pick-pocket. I once read an introductory lecture that looked to me too learned for its latitude. On examination, I found all its erudition was taken ready-made from D'Israeli. If I had been ill-natured, I should have shown up the little great man, who had once belaboured me in his feeble way. But one can generally tell these wholesale thieves easily enough, and they are not worth the trouble of putting them in the pillory. I doubt the entire novelty of my remarks just made on telling unpleasant truths, yet I am not conscious of any larceny.

Neither make too much of flaws and occasional overstatements. Some persons seem to think that absolute truth, in the form of rigidly stated propositions, is all that conversation admits. This is precisely as if a musician should insist upon having nothing but perfect chords and simple melodies,—no diminished fifths, no flat sevenths, no flourishes, on any account. Now it is fair to say, that just as music must have all these, so conversation must have its partial truths, its embellished truths, its exaggerated truths. It is in its higher forms an artistic product, and admits the ideal element as much as pictures or statues. One man who is a little too literal can spoil the talk of a whole tableful of men of *esprit*.—"Yes," you say, "but who wants to hear fanciful people's nonsense ? Put the facts to it, and then see where it is !" —Certainly, if a man is too fond of paradox,—if he is flighty and empty,—if, instead of striking those fifths and sevenths, those harmonious discords, often so much better than the twinned

octaves, in the music of thought,—if, instead of striking these, he jangles the chords, stick a fact into him like a stiletto. But remember that talking is one of the fine arts,—the noblest, the most important, and the most difficult,—and that its fluent harmony may be spoiled by the intrusion of a single harsh note. Therefore conversation which is suggestive rather than argumentative, which lets out the most of each talker's results of thought, is commonly the pleasantest and the most profitable. It is not easy, at the best, for two persons talking together to make the most of each other's thoughts, there are so many of them.

[The company looked as if they wanted an explanation.]

When John and Thomas, for instance, are talking together, it is natural enough that among the six there should be more or less confusion and misapprehension.

[Our landlady turned pale ;—no doubt she thought there was a screw loose in my intellects,—and that involved the probable loss of a boarder. A severe-looking person, who wears a Spanish cloak and a sad cheek, fluted by the passions of the melodrama, whom I understand to be the professional ruffian of the neighbouring theatre, alluded, with a certain lifting of the brow, drawing down of the corners of the mouth, and somewhat rasping *voce di petto*, to Falstaff's nine men in buckram. Every body looked up. I believe the old gentleman opposite was afraid I should seize the carving-knife ; at any rate, he slid it to one side, as it were carelessly.]

I think, I said, I can make it plain to Benjamin Franklin here, that there are at least six personalities distinctly to be recognised as taking part in that dialogue between John and Thomas.

- |                    |   |  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Three<br>Johns.    | { | 1. The real John ; known only to his Maker.  |
|                    |   | 2. John's ideal John ; never the real one, and often very unlike him.                        |
|                    |   | 3. Thomas's ideal John ; never the real John, nor John's John, but often very unlike either. |
| Three<br>Thomases. | { | 1. The real Thomas.  |
|                    |   | 2. Thomas's ideal Thomas.  |
|                    |   | 3. John's ideal Thomas.  |

Only one of the three Johns is taxed ; only one can be weighed on a platform-balance ; but the other two are just as important in the conversation. Let us suppose the real John to be old, dull, and ill-looking. But as the Higher Powers have not conferred on men the gift of seeing themselves in the true light, John very possibly conceives himself to be youthful, witty, and fascinating, and talks from the point of view of this ideal. Thomas, again, believes him to be an artful rogue, we will say ; therefore he is, so far as Thomas's attitude in the conversation is concerned, an artful rogue, though really simple and stupid. The same conditions apply to the three Thomases. It follows, that, until a man can be found who knows himself as his Maker knows



him, or who sees himself as others see him, there must be at least six persons engaged in every dialogue between two. Of these, the least important, philosophically speaking, is the one that we have called the real person. No wonder two disputants often get angry, when there are six of them talking and listening all at the same time.

[A very unphilosophical application of the above remarks was made by a young fellow, answering to the name of John, who sits near me at table. A certain basket of peaches—a rare vegetable, little known to boarding-houses—was on its way to me *via* this unlettered Johannes. He appropriated the three that remained in the basket, remarking that there was just one apiece for him. I convinced him that his practical inference was hasty and illogical, but in the mean time he had eaten the peaches.]—

The opinions of relatives as to a man's powers are very commonly of little value; not merely because they sometimes overrate their own flesh and blood, as some may suppose—on the contrary, they are quite as likely to underrate those whom they have grown into the habit of considering like themselves. The advent of genius is like what florists style the *breaking* of a seedling tulip into what we may call high-caste colours,—ten thousand dingy flowers, then one with the divine streak; or, if you prefer it, like the coming up in old Jacob's garden of that most gentlemanly little fruit, the seckel pear, which I have sometimes seen in shop-windows. It is a surprise,—there is nothing to account for it. All at once we find that twice two make *five*. Nature is fond of what are called "gift-enterprises." This little book of life which she has given into the hands of its joint possessors is commonly one of the old story-books bound over again. Only once in a great while there is a stately poem in it, or its leaves are illuminated with the glories of art, or they enfold a draft for untold values signed by the million-fold millionaire old mother herself. But strangers are commonly the first to find the "gift" that came with the little book.

It may be questioned whether any thing can be conscious of its own flavour. Whether the musk-deer, or the civet-cat, or even a still more eloquently silent animal that might be mentioned, is aware of any personal peculiarity, may well be doubted. No man knows his own voice; many men do not know their own profiles. Every one remembers Carlile's famous "Characteristics" article; allow for exaggerations, and there is a great deal in his doctrine of the self-unconsciousness of genius. It comes under the great law just stated. This incapacity of knowing its own traits is often found in the family as well as in the individual. So never mind what your cousins, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and the rest say about that fine poem you have written, but send it (postage-paid) to the editors, if there are any, of the *Atlantic*,—which, by the way, is not so called because it is a *notion*, as some dull wits wish they had said, but are too late.—

Scientific knowledge, even in the most modest persons, has mingled with it a something which partakes of insolence. Absolute, peremptory facts are bullies, and those who keep company with them are apt to get a bullying habit of mind ;—not of manners, perhaps ; they may be soft and smooth, but the smile they carry has a quiet assertion in it, such as the Champion of the Heavy Weights—commonly the best-natured, but not the most diffident of men—wears upon what he very inelegantly calls his “mug.” Take the man, for instance, who deals in the mathematical sciences. There is no elasticity in a mathematical fact ; if you bring up against it, it never yields a hair’s breadth ; every thing must go to pieces that comes in collision with it. What the mathematician knows being absolute, unconditional, incapable of suffering question, it should tend, in the nature of things, to breed a despotic way of thinking. So of those who deal with the palpable and often unmistakable facts of external nature ; only in a less degree. Every probability—and most of our common, working beliefs are probabilities—is provided with *buffers* at both ends, which break the force of opposite opinions clashing against it ; but scientific certainty has no spring in it, no courtesy, no possibility of yielding. All this must react on the minds which handle these forms of truth.—

Oh, you need not tell me that Messrs. A. and B. are the most gracious, unassuming people in the world, and yet preëminent in the ranges of science I am referring to. I know that as well as you. But mark this which I am going to say once for all : If I had not force enough to project a principle full in the face of the half-dozen most obvious facts which seem to contradict it, I would think only in single file from this day forward. A rash man, once visiting a certain noted institution at South Boston, ventured to express the sentiment, that man is a rational being. An old woman who was an attendant in the Idiot School contradicted the statement, and appealed to the facts before the speaker to disprove it. The rash man stuck to his hasty generalisation, notwithstanding.—

[It is my desire to be useful to those with whom I am associated in my daily relations. I not unfrequently practise the divine art of music in company with our landlady’s daughter, who, as I mentioned before, is the owner of an accordion. Having myself a well-marked barytone voice of more than half an octave in compass, I sometimes add my vocal powers to her execution of

“Thou, thou reign’st in this bosom,”—

not, however, unless her mother or some other discreet female is present, to prevent misinterpretation or remark. I have also taken a good deal of interest in Benjamin Franklin,—before referred to,—sometimes called B. F., or more frequently Frank, in imitation of that felicitous abbreviation, combining dignity and convenience, adopted by some of his betters. My acquaintance

with the French language is very imperfect, I having never studied it anywhere but in Paris, which is awkward, as B. F. devotes himself to it with the peculiar advantage of an Alsatian teacher. The boy, I think, is doing well, between us, notwithstanding. The following is an *uncorrected* French exercise, written by this young gentleman. His mother thinks it very creditable to his abilities; though, being unacquainted with the French language, her judgment cannot be considered final.

#### LE RAT DES SALONS A LECTURE.

Ce rat ci est un animal fort singulier. Il a deux pattes de derrière sur lesquelles il marche, et deux pattes de devant dont il fait usage pour tenir les journaux. Cet animal a la peau noire pour le plupart, et porte un cercle blanchâtre autour de son cou. On le trouve tous les jours aux dits salons, ou il demeure, digère, s'il y a de quoi dans son intérieur, respire, tousse, eternue, dort, et ronfle quelquefois, ayant toujours le semblant de lire. On ne sait pas s'il a une autre gîte que celà. Il a l'air d'une bête très stupide, mais il est d'une sagacité et d'une vitesse extraordinaire quand il s'agit de saisir un journal nouveau. On ne sait pas pourquoi il lit, parcequ'il ne paraît pas avoir des idées. Il vocalise rarement, mais en revanche, il fait des bruits nasaux divers. Il porte un crayon dans une de ses poches pectorales, avec lequel il fait des marques sur les bords des journaux et des livres, semblable aux suivans!!!—Bah! Pooh! Il ne faut pas cependant les prendre pour des signes d'intelligence. Il ne vole pas, ordinairement; il fait rarement même des échanges de parapluie, et jamais de chapeau, parceque son chapeau a toujours un caractère spécifique. On ne sait pas au juste ce dont il se nourrit. Feu Cuvier était d'avis que c'était de l'odeur du cuir les reliures; ce qu'on dit d'être de l'odeur du cuir des reliures; ce qu'on dit d'être une nourriture animale fort saine, et peu chère. Il vit bien longtems. Enfin il meure, en laissant à ses héritiers une carte du Salon à Lecture on il avait existé pendant sa vie. On prétend qu'il revient toutes les nuits, après la mort, visiter le Salon. On peut le voir, dit on, à minuit, dans sa place habituelle, tenant le journal du soir, et ayant à sa main un crayon de charbon. Le lendemain on trouve des caractères inconnus sur les bords du journal. Ce qui prouve que le spiritualisme est vrai, et que Messieurs les Professeurs de Cambridge sont des embeûles qui ne savent rien du tout, du tout.

I think this exercise, which I have not corrected, or allowed to be touched in any way, is not discreditable to B. F. You observe that he is acquiring a knowledge of zoology at the same time that he is learning French. Fathers of families in moderate circumstances will find it profitable to their children, and an economical mode of instruction, to set them to revising and amending this boy's exercise. The passage was originally taken from the *Histoire Naturelle des Bêtes Ruminans et Rongeurs, Bipèdes et Autres*, lately published in Paris. This was translated into English and published in London. It was republished at Great Pedlington, with notes and additions by the American editor. The notes consist of an interrogation-mark on page 53, and a reference (p. 127) to another book "edited" by the same hand. The additions consist of the editor's name on the title-page and back, with a complete and authentic list of said editor's honorary titles in the first of these localities. Our boy translated

the translation back into French. This may be compared with the original, to be found on Shelf 13, Division X., of the Public Library of this metropolis.]—

Some of you boarders ask me from time to time why I don't write a story, or a novel, or something of that kind. Instead of answering each one of you separately, I will thank you to step up into the wholesale department for a few moments, where I deal in answers by the piece and by the bale.

That every articulately-speaking human being has in him stuff for *one* novel in three volumes duodecimo has long been with me a cherished belief. It has been maintained, on the other hand, that many persons cannot write more than one novel—that all after that are likely to be failures. Life is so much more tremendous a thing in its heights and depths than any transcript of it can be, that all records of human experience are as so many bound *herbaria* to the innumerable glowing, glistening, rustling, breathing, fragrance-laden, poison-sucking, life-giving, death-distilling leaves and flowers of the forest and the prairies. All we can do with books of human experience is to make them alive again with something borrowed from our own lives. We can make a book alive for us just in proportion to its resemblance in essence or in form to our own experience. Now an author's first novel is naturally drawn, to a great extent, from his personal experiences—that is, is a literal copy of nature under various slight disguises. But the moment the author gets out of his personality, he must have the creative power, as well as the narrative art and the sentiment, in order to tell a living story; and this is rare.

Besides, there is great danger that a man's first life-story shall clean him out, so to speak, of his best thoughts. Most lives, though their stream is loaded with sand and turbid with alluvial waste, drop a few golden grains of wisdom as they flow along. Oftentimes a single *cradling* gets them all, and after that the poor man's labour is only rewarded by mud and worn pebbles. All which proves that I, as an individual of the human family, could write one novel or story at any rate, if I would.

Why don't I, then? Well, there are several reasons against it. In the first place, I should tell all my secrets, and I maintain that verse is the proper medium for such revelations. Rhythm and rhyme and the harmonies of musical language, the play of fancy, the fire of imagination, the flashes of passion, so hide the nakedness of a heart laid open, that hardly any confession, transfigured in the luminous halo of poetry, is reproached as self-exposure. A beauty shows herself under the chandeliers, protected by the glitter of her diamonds, with such a broad snow-drift of white arms and shoulders laid bare, that, were she unadorned and in plain calico, she would be unendurable—in the opinion of the ladies.

Again, I am terribly afraid I should show up all my friends.

I should like to know if all story-tellers do not do this? Now, I am afraid all my friends would not bear showing up very well; for they have an average share of the common weakness of humanity, which I am pretty certain would come out. Of all that have told stories among us, there is hardly one I can recall who has not drawn too faithfully some living portrait that might better have been spared.

Once more, I have sometimes thought it possible I might be too dull to write such a story as I should wish to write.

And finally, I think it very likely I *shall* write a story one of these days. Don't be surprised at any time if you see me coming out with "The Schoolmistress," or "The Old Gentleman Opposite." [*Our* schoolmistress, and *our* old gentleman that sits opposite had left the table before I said this.] I want my glory for writing the same discounted now, on the spot, if you please. I will write when I get ready. How many people live on the reputation of the reputation they might have made!

I saw you smiled when I spoke about the possibility of my being too dull to write a good story. I don't pretend to know what you meant by it, but I take occasion to make a remark which may hereafter prove of value to some among you. When one of us who has been led by native vanity or senseless flattery to think himself or herself possessed of talent arrives at the full and final conclusion that he or she is really dull, it is one of the most tranquillising and blessed convictions that can enter a mortal's mind. All our failures, our shortcomings, our strange disappointments in the effect of our efforts, are lifted from our bruised shoulders, and fall, like Christian's pack, at the feet of that Omnipotence which has seen fit to deny us the pleasant gift of high intelligence, with which one look may overflow us in some wider sphere of being.

How sweetly and honestly one said to me the other day, "I hate books!" A gentleman, singularly free from affectations; not learned, of course, but of perfect breeding, which is often so much better than learning; by no means dull in the sense of knowledge of the world and society, but certainly not clever either in the arts or sciences; his company is pleasing to all who know him. I did not recognise in him inferiority of literary taste half so distinctly as I did simplicity of character and fearless acknowledgment of his inaptitude for scholarship. In fact, I think there are a great many gentlemen and others, who read with a mark to keep their place, that really "hate books," but never had the wit to find it out, or the manliness to own it. [*Entre nous*, I always read with a mark.]

We get into a way of thinking as if what we call an "intellectual man" was, as a matter of course, made up of nine-tenths, or thereabouts, of book-learning, and one-tenth himself. But even if he is actually so compounded, he need not read much. Society is a strong solution of books. It draws the virtue out of what is

best worth reading, as hot water draws the strength of tea-leaves. If I were a prince, I would hire or buy a private literary teapot, in which I would steep all the leaves of new books that promised well. The infusion would do for me without the vegetable fibre. You would understand me ; I would have a person whose sole business should be to read day and night, and talk to me whenever I wanted him to. I know the man I would have : a quick-witted, out-spoken, incisive fellow ; knows history, or at any rate has a shelf-full of books about it, which he can use handily, and the same of all useful arts and sciences ; knows all the common plots of plays and novels, and the stock company of characters that are continually coming on in new costume ; can give you a criticism of an octavo in an epithet and a wink, and you can depend on it ; cares for nobody except for the virtue there is in what he says ; delights in taking off big wigs and professional gowns, and in the disembalming and unbandaging of all literary mummies. Yet he is as tender and reverential to all that bears the mark of genius—that is, of a new influx of truth or beauty—as a nun over her Missal. In short, he is one of those men that know everything except how to make a living. Him would I keep on the square next my own royal compartment on life's chessboard. To him I would push up another pawn, in the shape of a comely and wise young woman, whom he would of course take—to wife. For all contingencies I would liberally provide. In a word, I would, in the plebeian but expressive phrase, “put him through” all the material part of life ; see him sheltered, warmed, fed, button-mended, and all that, just to be able to lay on his talk when I liked, with the privilege of shutting it off at will.

A Club is the next best thing to this, strung like a harp, with about a dozen ringing intelligences, each answering to some chord of the macrocosm. They do well to dine together once in a while. A dinner-party made up of such elements is the last triumph of civilisation over barbarism. Nature and art combine to charm the senses ; the equatorial zone of the system is soothed by well-studied artifices ; the faculties are off duty, and fall into their natural attitudes ; you see wisdom in slippers, and science in a short jacket.

The whole course of conversation depends on how much you can take for granted. Vulgar chess-players have to play their game out ; nothing short of the brutality of an actual checkmate satisfies their dull apprehensions. But look at two masters of that noble game ! White stands well enough, so far as you can see ; but Red says, Mate in six moves ;—White looks,—nods ;—the game is over. Just so in talking with first-rate men ; especially when they are good-natured and expansive, as they are apt to be at table. That blessed clairvoyance which sees into things without opening them,—that glorious license, which, having shut the door and driven the reporter from its key-hole, calls

upon Truth, majestic virgin! to get off from her pedestal and drop her academic poses, and take a festive garland and the vacant place on the *medius lectus*,—that carnival-shower of questions and replies and comments, large axioms bowled over the mahogany like bombshells from professional mortars, and explosive wit dropping its trains of many-coloured fire, and the mischief-making rain of *bon-bons* pelting every body that shows himself,—the picture of a truly intellectual banquet is one which the old Divinities might well have attempted to reproduce in their—

“Oh, oh, oh!” cried the young fellow whom they call John,—“that is from one of your lectures!”—

I know it, I replied,—I concede it, I confess it, I proclaim it.

“The trail of the serpent is over them all.”

All lecturers, all professors, all schoolmasters, have ruts and grooves in their minds into which their conversation is perpetually sliding. Did you never, in riding through the woods of a still June evening, suddenly feel that you had passed into a warm stratum of air, and in a minute or two strike the chill layer of atmosphere beyond? Did you never, in cleaving the green waters of the Back Bay,—where the Provincial blue-noses are in the habit of beating the “Metropolitan” boat-clubs,—find yourself in a tepid streak, a narrow, local gulf-stream, a gratuitous warm-bath a little underdone, through which your glistening shoulders soon flashed, to bring you back to the cold realities of full-sea temperature? Just so, in talking with any of the characters above referred to, one not unfrequently finds a sudden change in the style of the conversation. The lack-lustre eye, rayless as a Beacon-Street door-plate in August, all at once fills with light; the face flings itself wide open like the church-portals when the bride and bridegroom enter; the little man grows in stature before your eyes, like the small prisoner with hair on end, beloved yet dreaded of early childhood; you were talking with a dwarf and an imbecile,—you have a giant and a trumpet-tongued angel before you!—Nothing but a streak out of a fifty-dollar lecture.—As when, at some unlooked-for moment, the mighty fountain-column springs into the air before the astonished passer-by,—silver-footed, diamond-crowned, rainbow-scarfed,—from the bosom of that fair sheet, sacred to the hymns of quiet batrachians at home, and the epigrams of a less amiable and less elevated order of *reptilia* in other latitudes.—

Who was that person that was so abused some time since for saying that in the conflict of two races our sympathies naturally go with the higher? No matter who he was. Now look at what is going on in India,—a white, superior “Caucasian” race, against a dark-skinned, inferior, but still “Caucasian” race,—and where are English and American sympathies? We can’t stop to settle all the doubtful questions; all we know is, that the



brute nature is sure to come out most strongly in the lower race, and it is the general law that the human side of humanity should treat the brutal side as it does the same nature in the inferior animals,—tame it or crush it. The India mail brings stories of women and children outraged and murdered; the royal stronghold is in the hands of the babe-killers. England takes down the Map of the World, which she has girdled with empire, and makes a correction thus: DELHI. *Dele.* The civilised world says, Amen.—

Do not think, because I talk to you of many subjects briefly, that I should not find it much lazier work to take each one of them and dilute it down to an essay. Borrow some of my old college themes and water my remarks to suit yourselves, as the Homeric heroes did with their *melas oinos*,—that black, sweet, sirupy wine (?) which they used to alloy with three parts or more of the flowing stream. [Could it have been *melasses*, as Webster and his provincials spell it,—or *Molossa's*, as dear old smattering, chattering, would-be-College-President, Cotton Mather, has it in the *Magnalia*? Ponder thereon, ye small antiquaries, who make barn-door-fowl flights of learning in “Notes and Queries!”—ye Historical Societies, in one of whose venerable triremes I, too, ascend the stream of time, while other hands tug at the oars!—ye Amines of parasitical literature, who pick up your grains of native-grown food with a bodkin, having gorged upon less honest fare, until, like the great minds Goethe speaks of, you have “made a Golgotha” of your pages!—ponder thereon!]

Before you go, this morning, I want to read you a copy of verses. You will understand by the title that they are written in an imaginary character. I don't doubt they will fit some family-man well enough. I send it forth as “Oak Hall” projects a coat, on *à priori* grounds of conviction that it will suit somebody. There is no loftier illustration of faith than this. It believes that a soul has been clad in flesh; that tender parents have fed and nurtured it; that its mysterious *compages* or framework has survived its myriad exposures and reached the stature of maturity; that the Man, now self-determining, has given in his adhesion to the traditions and habits of the race in favour of artificial clothing; that he will, having all the world to choose from, select the very locality where this audacious generalisation has been acted upon. It builds a garment cut to the pattern of an Idea, and trusts that Nature will model a material shape to fit it. There is a prophecy in every seam, and its pockets are full of inspiration.—Now hear the verses.

#### THE OLD MAN DREAMS.

Oh, for one hour of youthful joy!  
Give back my twentieth spring!  
I'd rather laugh a bright-haired boy,  
Than reign a gray-beard king!



Off with the wrinkled spoils of age,  
 Away with learning's crown,  
 Tear out life's wisdom-written page,  
 And dash its trophies down!  
 One moment let my life-blood stream  
 From boyhood's fount of flame;  
 Give me one giddy, reeling dream  
 Of life all love and fame!  
 My listening angel heard the prayer,  
 And, calmly smiling, said,  
 "If I but touch thy silvered hair,  
 Thy hasty wish hath sped.  
 "But is there nothing in thy track  
 To bid thee fondly stay,  
 While the swift seasons hurry back  
 To find the wished-for day?"  
 Ah, truest soul of womankind,  
 Without thee what were life?  
 One bliss I cannot leave behind,  
 I'll take—my—precious—wife!  
 The angel took a sapphire pen,  
 And wrote in rainbow dew,  
 "The man would be a boy again,  
 And be a husband too!"  
 "And is there nothing yet unsaid  
 Before the change appears?  
 Remember, all their gifts have fled  
 With those dissolving years!"  
 Why, yes—for memory would recall  
 My fond parental joys;  
 I could not bear to leave them all—  
 I'll take—my—girl—and—boys!  
 The smiling angel dropped his pen,—  
 "Why, this will never do;  
 The man would be a boy again,  
 And be a father too!"  
 And so I laughed—my laughter woke  
 The household with its noise—  
 And wrote my dream, when morning broke,  
 To please the gray-haired boys.

## IV.

[I AM so well pleased with my boarding-house that I intend to remain there, perhaps for years. Of course I shall have a great many conversations to report, and they will necessarily be of different tone and on different subjects. The talks are like the breakfasts—sometimes dipped toast, and sometimes dry. You must take them as they come. How can I do what all these letters ask me to? No. 1 wants serious and earnest thought. No. 2 (letter smells of bad cigars) must have more jokes; wants me to tell a "good storey" which he has copied out for me. (I suppose two letters before the word "good" refer to some Doctor of Divinity who told the story.) No. 3 (in female hand)—

more poetry. No. 4 wants something that would be of use to a practical man, (*Prahctical mahn* he probably pronounces it.) No. 5 (gilt-edged, sweet-scented)—“more sentiments”—“heart’s outpourings.”

My dear friends, one and all, I can do nothing but report such remarks as I happen to have made at our breakfast-table. Their character will depend on many accidents—a good deal on the particular persons in the company to whom they were addressed. It so happens that those which follow were mainly intended for the divinity-student and the schoolmistress; though others, whom I need not mention, saw fit to interfere, with more or less propriety, in the conversation. This is one of my privileges as a talker: and, of course, if I was not talking for our whole company, I don’t expect all the readers of this periodical to be interested in my notes of what was said. Still, I think there may be a few that will rather like this vein—possibly prefer it to a livelier one—serious young men and young women generally, in life’s roseate parenthesis from — years of age to — inclusive.

Another privilege of talking is to misquote. Of course it wasn’t Proserpina that actually cut the yellow hair, but *Iris*. (As I have since told you) it was the former lady’s regular business, but Dido had used herself ungenteelly, and Madame d’Enfer stood firm on the point of etiquette. So the bathycolpian Here—Juno, in Latin—sent down *Iris* instead. But I was mightily pleased to see that one of the gentlemen that do the heavy articles for the celebrated *Oceanic Miscellany* misquoted Campbell’s line without any excuse. “Waft us *home* the *message*” of course it ought to be. Will he be duly grateful for the correction?]

The more we study the body and the mind, the more we find both to be governed, not *by*, but *according to* laws, such as we observe in the larger universe. You think you know all about *walking*—don’t you, now? Well, how do you suppose your lower limbs are held to your body? They are sucked up by two cupping vessels (“cotyloid”—cup-like—cavities), and held there as long as you live, and longer. At any rate, you think you move them backward and forward at such a rate as your will determines—don’t you? On the contrary, they swing just as any other pendulums swing, at a fixed rate, determined by their length. You can alter this by muscular power, as you can take hold of the pendulum of a clock and make it move faster or slower; but your ordinary gait is timed by the same mechanism as the movements of the solar system.

[My friend the Professor told me all this, referring me to certain German physiologists by the name of Weber for proof of the facts, which, however, he said he had often verified. I appropriated it to my own use; what can one do better than this, when one has a friend that tells him anything worth remembering?

The Professor seems to think that man and the general powers of the universe are in partnership. Some one was saying that it

had cost nearly half a million to move the Leviathan only so far as they had got it already. "Why," said the Professor, "they might have hired an EARTHQUAKE for less money !"]

Just as we find a mathematical rule at the bottom of many of the bodily movements, just so thought may be supposed to have its regular cycles. Such or such a thought comes round periodically, in its turn. Accidental suggestions, however, so far interfere with the regular cycles, that we may find them practically beyond our power of recognition. Take all this for what it is worth, but at any rate you will agree that there are certain particular thoughts that do not come up once a day, nor once a week, but that a year would hardly go round without your having them pass through your mind. Here is one which comes up at intervals in this way. Some one speaks of it, and there is an instant and eager smile of assent in the listener or listeners. Yes, indeed ; they have often been struck by it.

*All at once a conviction flashes through us that we have been in the same precise circumstances as at the present instant, once or many times before.*

Oh, dear, yes !—said one of the company—everybody has had that feeling.

The landlady didn't know anything about such notions ; it was an idea in folks' heads, she expected.

The schoolmistress said, in a hesitating sort of way, that she knew the feeling well, and didn't like to experience it ; it made her think she was a ghost, sometimes.

The young fellow whom they call John said he knew all about it ; he had just lighted a cheroot the other day, when a tremendous conviction all at once came over him that he had done just that same thing ever so many times before. I looked severely at him, and his countenance immediately fell—*on the side toward me* ; I cannot answer for the other, for he can wink and laugh with either half of his face without the other half's knowing it. I have noticed—I went on to say—the following circumstances connected with these sudden impressions. First, that the condition which seems to be the duplicate of a former one is often very trivial—one that might have presented itself a hundred times. Secondly, that the impression is very evanescent, and that it is rarely, if ever, recalled by any voluntary effort, at least after any time has elapsed. Thirdly, that there is a disinclination to record the circumstances, and a sense of incapacity to reproduce the state of mind in words. Fourthly, I have often felt that the duplicate condition had not only occurred once before, but that it was familiar, and, as it seemed, habitual. Lastly, I have had the same convictions in my dreams.

How do I account for it ? Why, there are several ways that I can mention, and you may take your choice. The first is that which the young lady hinted at—that these flashes are sudden recollections of a previous existence. I don't believe that ; for I *remember* a poor student I used to know told me he had such a

conviction one day when he was blacking his boots, and I can't think he had ever lived in another world where they use Day and Martin.

Some think that Dr. Wigan's doctrine of the brain's being a double organ, its hemispheres working together like the two eyes, accounts for it. One of the hemispheres hangs fire, they suppose, and the small interval between the perceptions of the nimble and the sluggish half seems an indefinitely long period, and therefore the second perception appears to be the copy of another, ever so old. But even allowing the centre of perception to be double, I can see no good reason for supposing this indefinite lengthening of the time, nor any analogy that bears it out. It seems to me most likely that the coincidence of circumstances is very partial, but that we take this partial resemblance for identity, as we occasionally do resemblances of persons. A momentary posture of circumstances is so far like some preceding one that we accept it as exactly the same, just as we accost a stranger occasionally, mistaking him for a friend. The apparent similarity may be owing perhaps quite as much to the mental state at the time, as to the outward circumstances.

Here is another of these curiously recurring remarks. I have said it and heard it many times, and occasionally met with something like it in books—somewhere in Bulwer's novels, I think, and in one of the works of Mr. Olmstead, I know.

*Memory, imagination, old sentiments and associations, are more readily reached through the sense of SMELL than by almost any other channel.*

Of course the particular odours which act upon each person's susceptibilities differ. Oh, yes! I will tell you some of mine. The smell of *phosphorus* is one of them. During a year or two of adolescence I used to be dabbling in chemistry a good deal, and as about that time I had my little aspirations and passions like another, some of these things got mixed up with each other; orange-coloured fumes of nitrous acid, and visions as bright and transient; reddening litmus-paper, and blushing cheeks—*ehéu!*

“*Soles occidere et redire possunt;*”

but there is no reagent that will redden the faded roses of eighteen hundred and——spare them! But, as I was saying, phosphorus fires this train of associations in an instant; its luminous vapours with their penetrating odour throw me into a trance; it comes to me in a double sense “trailing clouds of glory.” Only the confounded Vienna matches, *ohne phosphorgeruch*, have worn my sensibilities a little.

Then there is the *marigold*. When I was of smallest dimensions, and went to ride impacted between the knees of fond parental pair, we would sometimes cross the bridge to the next village-town, and stop opposite a low, brown, “*gambrel-roofed*”

cottage. Out of it would come one Sally, sister of its swarthy tenant; swarthy herself, shady-lipped, sad-voiced, and, bending over her flower-bed, would gather a "posy," as she called it, for the little boy. Sally lies in the churchyard with a slab of blue slate at her head, lichen-crustcd, and leaning a little within the last few years. Cottage, garden-beds, posies, grenadier-like rows of seedling onions—stateliest of vegetables—all are gone, but the breath of a marigold brings them all back to me.

Perhaps the herb *everlasting*, the fragrant *immortelle* of our autumn fields, has the most suggestive odour to me of all those that set me dreaming. I can hardly describe the strange thoughts and emotions that come to me as I inhale the aroma of its pale, dry, rustling flowers. A something it has of sepulchral spicery, as if it had been brought from the core of some great pyramid, where it had lain on the breast of a mummied Pharaoh. Something, too, of immortality in the sad, faint sweetness lingering so long in its lifeless petals. Yet this does not tell why it fills my eyes with tears and carries me in blissful thought to the banks of asphodel that border the River of Life.

I should not have talked so much about these personal susceptibilities, if I had not a remark to make about them which I believe is a new one. It is this. There may be a physical reason for the strange connection between the sense of smell and the mind. The olfactory nerve—so my friend the Professor tells me—is the only one directly connected with the hemispheres of the brain, the parts in which, as we have every reason to believe, the intellectual processes are performed. To speak more truly, the olfactory "nerve" is not a nerve at all, he says, but a part of the brain, in intimate connection with its anterior lobes. Whether this anatomical arrangement is at the bottom of the facts I have mentioned I will not decide, but it is curious enough to be worth remembering. Contrast the sense of taste, as a source of suggestive impressions, with that of smell. Now the Professor assures me that you will find the nerve of taste has no immediate connection with the brain proper, but only with the prolongation of the spinal cord.

[The old gentleman opposite did not pay much attention, I think, to this hypothesis of mine. But while I was speaking about the sense of smell, he nestled about in his seat, and presently succeeded in getting out a large red bandanna handkerchief. Then he lurched a little to the other side, and after much tribulation at last extricated an ample round snuff-box. I looked as he opened it and felt for the wonted pugil. Moist rappee, and a tonka-bean lying therein. I made the manual sign understood of all mankind that use the precious dust, and presently my brain, too, responded to the long unused stimulus.—O boys—that were—actual papas and possible grandpapas—some of you with crowns like billiard-balls—some in locks of sable silvered, and some of silver sabled—do you remember, as you dose over

this, those after-dinners at the Trois Frères, when the Scotch-plaided snuff-box went round, and the dry Lundy-Foot tickled its way along into our happy sensoria? Then it was that the Chambertin or the Clos Vougeot came in, slumbering in its straw cradle. And one among you—do you remember how he would have a bit of ice always in his Burgundy, and sit tinkling it against the sides of the bubble-like glass, saying that he was hearing the cow-bells as he used to hear them, when the deep-breathing kine came home at twilight from the huckleberry pasture, in the old home a thousand leagues towards the sunset?]

Ah, me! what strains and strophes of unwritten verse pulsate through my soul when I open a certain closet in the ancient house where I was born! On its shelves used to lie bundles of sweet marjoram, and pennyroyal, and lavender, and mint, and catnip; there apples were stored until their seeds should grow black, which happy period there were sharp little milk-teeth always ready to anticipate; there peaches lay in the dark, thinking of the sunshine they had lost, until, like the hearts of saints that dream of heaven in their sorrow, they grew fragrant as the breath of angels. The odorous echo of a score of dead summers lingers yet in those dim recesses.

Do I remember Byron's line about "striking the electric chain"?—To be sure I do. I sometimes think the less the hint that stirs the automatic machinery of association, the more easily this moves us. What can be more trivial than that old story of opening the folio of Shakespeare that used to lie in some ancient English hall, and finding the flakes of Christmas pastry between its leaves, shut up in them perhaps a hundred years ago? And, lo! as one looks on these poor relics of a by-gone generation, the universe changes in the twinkling of an eye; old George the Second is back again, and the elder Pitt is coming into power, and General Wolfe is a fine promising young man, and over the Channel they are pulling the Sieur Damiens to pieces with wild horses, and across the Atlantic the Indians are tomahawking Hiram and Jonathans, and Jonases at Fort William Henry; all the dead people who have been in the dust so long—even to the stout-armed cook that made the pastry—are alive again; the planet unwinds a hundred of its luminous coils, and the precession of the equinoxes is retraced on the dial of heaven! And all this for a bit of pie-crust!—

I will thank you for that pie, said the provoking young fellow whom I have named repeatedly. He looked at it for a moment and put his hands to his eyes as if moved. I was thinking, he said indistinctly.

How? What is't? said our landlady.

I was thinking, said he, who was King of England when this old pie was baked; and it made me feel bad to think how long he must have been dead.

[Our landlady is a decent body, poor, and a widow, of course;

*cela va sans dire.* She told me her story once ; it was as if a grain of corn that had been ground and bolted had tried to individualise itself by a special narrative. There was the wooing and the wedding, the start in life, the disappointment, the children she had buried, the struggle against fate, the dismantling of life—first of its small luxuries, and then of its comforts—the broken spirits, the altered character of the one on whom she leaned, and at last the death that came and drew the black curtain between her and all her earthly hopes.

I never laughed at my landlady after she had told me her story, but I often cried—not those pattering tears that run off the eaves upon our neighbour's grounds, the *stillicidium* of self-conscious sentiment, but those which steal noiselessly through their conduits until they reach the cisterns lying round about the heart ; those tears that we weep inwardly with unchanging features—such I did shed for her often when the imps of the boarding-house Inferno tugged at her soul with their red-hot pincers.]

Young man, I said, the pasty you speak lightly of is not old, but courtesy to those who labour to serve us, especially if they are of the weaker sex, is very old, and yet well worth retaining. May I recommend to you the following caution, as a guide whenever you are dealing with a woman, or an artist, or a poet ; if you are handling an editor or politician, it is superfluous advice. I take it from the back of one of those little French toys which contain pasteboard figures moved by a small running stream of fine sand ; Benjamin Franklin will translate it for you : “ *Quoi-qu'elle soit très solidement montée, il faut ne pas BRUTALISER la machine.* ” I will thank you for the pie, if you please.

[I took more of it than was good for me—as much as 85°, I should think—and had an indigestion in consequence. While I was suffering from it, I wrote some sadly desponding poems, and a theological essay which took a very melancholy view of creation. When I got better, I labelled them all “Pie-crust,” and laid them by as scarecrows and solemn warnings. I have a number of books on my shelves that I should like to label with some such title ; but, as they have great names on their title-pages—Doctors of Divinity, some of them—it wouldn't do.]

My friend the Professor, whom I have mentioned to you once or twice, told me yesterday that somebody had been abusing him in some of the journals of his calling. I told him that I didn't doubt he deserved it ; that I hoped he did deserve a little abuse occasionally, and would for a number of years to come ; that nobody could do anything to make his neighbours wiser or better without being liable to abuse for it ; especially that people hated to have their little mistakes made fun of, and perhaps he had been doing something of the kind. The Professor smiled. Now, said I, hear what I am going to say. It will not take many years to bring you to the period of life when men—at



least the majority of writing and talking men—do nothing but praise. Men, like peaches and pears, grow sweet a little while before they begin to decay. I don't know what it is—whether a spontaneous change, mental or bodily, or whether it is thorough experience of the thanklessness of critical honesty—but it is a fact that most writers, except sour and unsuccessful ones, get tired of finding fault at about the time when they are beginning to grow old. As a general thing, I would not give a great deal for the fair words of a critic, if he is himself an author over fifty years of age. At thirty we are all trying to cut our names in big letters upon the walls of this tenement of life; twenty years later we have carved it, or shut up our jack-knives. Then we are ready to help others, and care less to hinder any, because nobody's elbows are in our way. So I am glad you have a little life left; you will be saccharine enough in a few years.

Some of the softening effects of advancing age have struck me very much in what I have heard or seen here and elsewhere. I just now spoke of the sweetening process that authors undergo. Do you know that in the gradual passage from maturity to helplessness the harshest characters sometimes have a period in which they are gentle and placid as young children? I have heard it said, but I cannot be sponsor for its truth, that the famous chieftain, Lochiel, was rocked in a cradle like a baby in his old age. An old man, whose studies had been of the severest scholastic kind, used to love to hear little nursery stories read over and over to him. One who saw the Duke of Wellington in his last years describes him as very gentle in his aspect and demeanour. I remember a person of singularly stern and lofty bearing who became remarkably gracious and easy in all his ways in the later period of his life.

And that leads me to say that men often remind me of pears in their way of coming to maturity. Some are ripe at twenty, like human Jargonelles, and must be made the most of, for their day is soon over. Some come into their perfect condition late, like the autumn kinds, and they last better than the summer fruit; and some that, like the Winter-Nelis, have been hard and uninviting until all the rest have had their season, get their glow and perfume long after the frost and snow have done their worst with the orchards. Beware of rash criticisms; the rough and stringent fruit you condemn may be an autumn or a winter pear, and that which you picked up beneath the same bough in August may have been only its worm-eaten windfalls. Milton was a Saint-Germain with a graft of the roseate Early-Catherine. Rich, juicy, lively, fragrant, russet-skinned old Chaucer was an Easter-Beurré; the buds of a new summer were swelling when he ripened.

There is no power I envy so much—said the divinity-student—as that of seeing analogies and making comparisons. I don't understand how it is that some minds are continually coupling thoughts or objects that seem not in the least related to each



other, until all at once they are put in a certain light, and you wonder that you did not always see that they were as like as a pair of twins. It appears to me a sort of miraculous gift.

[He is rather a nice young man, and I think has an appreciation of the higher mental qualities remarkable for one of his years and training. I try his head occasionally as housewives try eggs—give it an intellectual shake and hold it up to the light, so to speak, to see if it has life in it, actual or potential, or only contains lifeless albumen.]

You call it *miraculous*—I replied, tossing the expression with my facial eminence, a little smartly, I fear. Two men are walking by the polyphloesbœan ocean, one of them having a small tin cup with which he can scoop up a gill of sea-water when he will, and the other nothing but his hands, which will hardly hold water at all—and you call the tin cup a miraculous possession! It is the ocean that is the miracle, my infant apostle! Nothing is clearer than that all things are in all things, and that just according to the intensity and extension of our mental being we shall see the many in the one and the one in the many. Did Sir Isaac think what he was saying when he made *his* speech about the ocean—the child and the pebbles, you know? Did he mean to speak slightly of a pebble? Of a spherical solid which stood sentinel over its compartment of space before the stone that became the pyramids had grown solid, and has watched it until now! A body which knows all the currents of force that traverse the globe; which holds by invisible threads to the ring of Saturn and the belt of Orion! A body from the contemplation of which an archangel could infer the entire inorganic universe as the simplest of corollaries! A throne of the all-pervading Deity, who has guided its every atom since the rosary of heaven was strung with beaded stars!

So—to return to *our* walk by the ocean—if all that poetry has dreamed, all that insanity has raved, all that maddening narcotics have driven through the brains of men, or smothered passion nursed in the fancies of women—if the dreams of colleges, and convents, and boarding-schools—if every human feeling that sighs, or smiles, or curses, or shrieks, or groans, should bring all their innumerable images, such as come with every hurried heart-beat—the epic which held them all, though its letters filled the zodiac, would be but a cupful from the infinite ocean of similitudes and analogies that rolls through the universe.

[The divinity-student honoured himself by the way in which he received this. He did not swallow it at once, neither did he reject it; but he took it as a pickerel takes the bait, and carried it off with him to his hole (in the fourth storey) to deal with at his leisure.]—

Here is another remark made for his especial benefit.—There is a natural tendency in many persons to run their adjectives together in *triads*, as I have heard them called,—thus: He was

honourable, courteous, and brave ; she was graceful, pleasing, and virtuous. Dr. Johnson is famous for this ; I think it was Buller who said you can separate a paper in the *Rambler* into three distinct essays. Many of our writers show the same tendency,—my friend the Professor especially. Some think it is in humble imitation of Johnson,—some that it is for the sake of the stately sound only. I don't think they get to the bottom of it. It is, I suspect, an instinctive and involuntary effort of the mind to present a thought or image with the *three dimensions* that belong to every solid,—an unconscious handling of an idea as if it had length, breadth, and thickness. It is a great deal easier to say this than to prove it, and a great deal easier to dispute it than to disprove it. But mind this : the more we observe and study, the wider we find the range of the automatic and instinctive principles in body, mind, and morals, and the narrower the limits of the self-determining conscious movement.—

I have often seen piano-forte players and singers make such strange motions over their instruments or song-books, that I wanted to laugh at them. “Where did our friends pick up all these fine ecstatic airs?” I would say to myself. Then I would remember My Lady in “Marriage à la Mode,” and amuse myself with thinking how affectation was the same thing in Hogarth's time and in our own. But one day I bought me a canary-bird and hung him up in a cage at my window. By and by he found himself at home, and began to pipe his little tunes ; and there he was, sure enough, swimming and waving about, with all the droopings and liftings and languishing side-turnings of the head that I had laughed at. And now I should like to ask, WHO taught him all this ?—and me, through him, that the foolish head was not the one swinging itself from side to side, and bowing and nodding over the music, but that other which was passing its shallow and self-satisfied judgment on a creature made of finer clay than the frame which carried the same head upon its shoulders ?—

Do you want an image of the human will, or the self-determining principle as compared with its pre-arranged and impassable restrictions ? A drop of water imprisoned in a crystal ; you may see such a one in any mineralogical collection. One little fluid particle in the crystalline prism of the solid universe !—

Weaken moral obligations ?—No, not weaken, but define them. When I preach that sermon I spoke of the other day, I shall have to lay down some principles not fully recognised in some of your text-books.

I should have to begin with one most formidable preliminary. You saw an article the other day in one of the journals, perhaps, in which some old Doctor or other said quietly that patients were very apt to be fools and cowards. But a great many of the clergyman's patients are not only fools and cowards, but also liars.

[Immense sensation at the table.—Sudden retirement of the

angular female in oxidated bombazine. Movement of adhesion—as they say in the Chamber of Deputies—on the part of the young fellow they call John. Falling of the old-gentleman-opposite's lower jaw—(gravitation is beginning to get the better of him). Our landlady to Benjamin Franklin, briskly,—Go to school right off, there's a good boy! Schoolmistress curious,—takes a quick glance at divinity-student. Divinity-student, slightly flushed, draws his shoulders back a little, as if a big falsehood—or truth—had hit him in the forehead. Myself calm.]—

I should not make such a speech as that, you know, without having pretty substantial indorsers to fall back upon, in case my credit should be disputed. Will you run up-stairs, Benjamin Franklin (for B. F. had *not* gone right off, of course), and bring down a small volume from the left upper corner of the right-hand shelves?

[Look at the precious little black, ribbed-backed, clean-typed, vellum-papared 32mo. “DESIDERII ERASMI COLLOQUIA. Amstelodami. Typis Ludovici Elzevirii. 1650.” Various names written on title-page. Most conspicuous this: Gul. Cookeson E. Coll. Omn. Anim. 1725. Oxon.—

O William Cookeson, of All-Souls College, Oxford,—then writing as I now write,—now in the dust, where I shall lie,—is this line all that remains to thee of earthly remembrance?—Thy name is at least once more spoken by living men;—is it a pleasure to thee? Thou shalt share with me my little draught of immortality,—its week, its month, its year,—whatever it may be,—and then we will go together into the solemn archives of Oblivion's Uncatalogued Library!]

If you think I have used rather strong language, I shall have to read something to you out of the book of this keen and witty scholar,—the great Erasmus,—who “laid the egg of the Reformation which Luther hatched.” Oh, you never read his *Naufragium*, or “Shipwreck,” did you? Of course not; for, if you had, I don't think you would have given me credit—or discredit—for entire originality in that speech of mine. That men are cowards in the contemplation of futurity he illustrates by the extraordinary antics of many on board the sinking vessel; that they are fools, by their praying to the sea, and making promises to bits of wood from the true cross, and all manner of similar nonsense; that they are fools, cowards, and liars all at once, by this story: I will put it into rough English for you.—“I couldn't help laughing to hear one fellow bawling out, so that he might be sure to be heard, a promise to St. Christopher of Paris—the monstrous statue in the great church there—that he would give him a wax taper as big as himself. ‘Mind what you promise!’ said an acquaintance that stood near him, poking him with his elbow; ‘you couldn't pay for it, if you sold all your things at auction.’ ‘Hold your tongue, you donkey!’ said the fellow,—but softly, so that St. Christopher should not hear him,—‘do you think I'm

in earnest? If I once get my foot on dry ground, catch me giving him so much as a tallow candle !”

Now, therefore, remembering that those who have been loudest in their talk about the great subject of which we were speaking have not necessarily been wise, brave, and true men, but, on the contrary, have very often been wanting in one or two or all of the qualities these words imply, I should expect to find a good many doctrines current in the schools which I should be obliged to call foolish, cowardly, and false.—

So you would abuse other people’s beliefs, sir, and yet not tell us your own creed !—said the divinity-student, colouring up with a spirit for which I liked him all the better.—

I have a creed, I replied ;—none better, and none shorter. It is told in two words,—the two first of the Paternoster. And when I say these words I mean them. And when I compared the human will to a drop in a crystal, and said I meant to *define* moral obligations, and not weaken them, this was what I intended to express : that the fluent, self-determining power of human beings is a very strictly limited agency in the universe. The chief planes of its enclosing solid are, of course, organisation, education, condition. Organisation may reduce the power of the will to nothing, as in some idiots ; and from this zero the scale mounts upwards, by slight gradations. Education is only second to nature. Imagine all the infants born this year in Boston and Timbuctoo to change places ! Condition does less, but “ Give me neither poverty nor riches ” was the prayer of Agur, and with good reason. If there is any improvement in modern theology, it is in getting out of the region of pure abstractions and taking these every-day working forces into account. The great theological question now heaving and throbbing in the minds of Christian men is this :—

No, I won’t talk about these things now. My remarks might be repeated, and it would give my friends pain to see with what personal incivilities I should be visited. Besides, what business has a mere boarder to be talking about such things at a breakfast-table. Let him make puns. To be sure, he was brought up among the Christian fathers, and learned his alphabet out of a quarto *Concilium Tridentinum*. He has also heard many thousand theological lectures by men of various denominations ; and it is not at all to the credit of these teachers, if he is not fit by this time to express an opinion on theological matters.

I know well enough that there are some of you who had a great deal rather see me stand on my head than use it for any purpose of thought. Does not my friend the Professor receive at least two letters a week, requesting him to . . . . . on the strength of some youthful antic of his, which, no doubt, authorises the intelligent constituency of autograph-hunters to address him as a harlequin.—

Well, I can’t be savage with you for wanting to laugh, and I

like to make you laugh well enough, when I can. But then observe this : if the sense of the ridiculous is one side of an impressible nature, it is very well ; but if that is all there is in a man he had better have been an ape at once, and so have stood at the head of his profession. Laughter and tears are meant to turn the wheels of the same machinery of sensibility ; one is wind-power, and the other water-power ; that is all. I have often heard the Professor talk about hysterics as being Nature's cleverest illustration of the reciprocal convertibility of the two states of which these acts are the manifestations ; but you may see it every day in children ; and if you want to choke with stifled tears at sight of the transition, as it shows itself in older years, go and see Mr. Blake play *Jesse Rural*.

It is a very dangerous thing for a literary man to indulge his love for the ridiculous. People laugh *with* him just so long as he amuses them ; but if he attempts to be serious they must still have their laugh, and so they laugh *at* him. There is in addition, however, a deeper reason for this than would at first appear. Do you know that you feel a little superior to every man who makes you laugh, whether by making faces or verses ? Are you aware that you have a pleasant sense of patronising him when you condescend so far as to let him turn somersaults, literal or literary, for your royal 'delight' ? Now if a man can only be allowed to stand on a dais, or raised platform, and look down on his neighbour who is exerting his talent for him, oh, it is all right !—first-rate performance !—and all the rest of the fine phrases. But if all at once the performer asks the gentleman to come upon the floor, and, stepping upon the platform, begins to talk down at him—ah, that wasn't in the programme !

I have never forgotten what happened when Sydney Smith—who, as everybody knows, was an exceedingly sensible man, and a gentleman, every inch of him—ventured to preach a sermon on the Duties of Royalty. The *Quarterly*, "so savage and tartarly," came down upon him in the most contemptuous style, as "a joker of jokes," a "diner-out of the first water," in one of his own phrases ; sneering at him, insulting him, as nothing but a toady of a court, sneaking behind the anonymous, would ever be mean enough to do to a man of his position and genius, or to any decent person even. If I were giving advice to a young fellow of talent, with two or three facets to his mind, I would tell him by all means to keep his wit in the background until after he had made a reputation by his more solid qualities. And so to an actor : *Hamlet* first, and *Eng Logic* afterwards, if you like ; but don't think, as they say poor Liston used to, that people will be ready to allow that you can do any thing great with *Macbeth's* dagger after flourishing about with *Paul Pry's* umbrella. Do you know, too, that the majority of men look upon all who challenge their attention—for a while at least—as nuisances and misuses ? They always try to get off as cheaply

as they can ; and the cheapest of all things they can give a literary man—pardon the forlorn pleasantry—is the *funny-bone*. That is all very well so far as it goes, but satisfies no man, and makes a good many angry, as I told you on a former occasion.—

Oh, indeed, no ! I am not ashamed to make you laugh, occasionally. I think I could read you something I have in my desk which would probably make you smile. Perhaps I will read it one of these days, if you are patient with me when I am sentimental and reflective ; not just now. The ludicrous has its place in the universe ; it is not a human invention, but one of the divine ideas, illustrated in the practical jokes of kittens and monkeys long before Aristophanes or Shakespeare. How curious it is that we always consider solemnity and the absence of all gay surprises and encounter of wits as essential to the idea of the future life of those whom we thus deprive of half their faculties, and then called *blessed* ! There are not a few who, even in this life, seem to be preparing themselves for that smileless eternity to which they look forward, by banishing all gaiety from their hearts and all joyousness from their countenances. I meet one such in the streets not unfrequently, a person of intelligence and education, but who gives me (and all that he passes) such a rayless and chilling look of recognition—something as if he were one of Heaven's assessors, come down to "doom every acquaintance he met—that I have sometimes begun to sneeze on the spot, and gone home with a violent cold, dating from that instant. I don't doubt he would cut his kitten's tail off, if he caught her playing with it. Please tell me, Who taught her to play with it ?

No, no !—give me a chance to talk to you, my fellow-boarders, and you need not be afraid that I shall have any scruples about entertaining you, if I can do it, as well as giving you some of my serious thoughts, and perhaps my sadder fancies. I know nothing in English or any other literature more admirable than that sentiment of Sir Thomas Browne—"EVERY MAN TRULY LIVES, SO LONG AS HE ACTS HIS NATURE, OR SOME WAY MAKES GOOD THE FACULTIES OF HIMSELF."

I find the great thing in this world is, not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. To reach the port of heaven we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but we must sail, and not drift, or lie at anchor. There is one very sad thing in old friendships, to every mind that is really moving onward. It is this : that one cannot help using his early friends as the seaman uses the log, to mark his progress. Every now and then we throw an old schoolmate over the stern with a string of thought tied to him, and look—I am afraid with a kind of luxurious and sanctimonious compassion—to see the rate at which the string reels off, while he lies there bobbing up and down, poor fellow ! and we are dashing

the series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral. Can you find no lesson in this?

### THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS. !

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
 Sails the unshadowed main,—  
 The venturous bark that flings  
 On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
 In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings,  
 And coral reefs lie bare,  
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.  
 Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
 And every chambered cell,  
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,  
 As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
 Before thee lies revealed,—  
 Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!  
 Year after year beheld the silent toil  
 That spread its lustrous coil;  
 Still, as the spiral grew,  
 He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
 Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
 Built up its idle door,  
 Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.  
 Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
 Child of the wandering sea,  
 Cast from her lap forlorn!  
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born  
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathed horn!  
 While on mine ear it rings,  
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—  
 Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul  
 As the swift seasons roll!  
 Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
 Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
 Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
 Till thou at length art free,  
 Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

### V.

A LYRIC conception—my friend the Poet said—hits me like a bullet in the forehead. I have often had the blood drop from my cheeks when it struck, and felt that I turned as white as death. Then comes a creeping as of centipedes running down the spine,—then a gasp and a great jump of the heart,—then a sudden flush and a beating in the vessels of the head,—then a long sigh,—and the poem is written.

It is an impromptu, I suppose, then, if you write it so suddenly,—I replied.

No,—said he,—far from it. I said written, but I did not say *copied*. Every such poem has a soul and a body, and it is the



body of it, or the copy, that men read and publishers pay for. The soul of it is born in an instant in the poet's soul. It comes to him a thought, tangled in the meshes of a few sweet words,—words that have loved each other from the cradle of the language, but have never been wedded until now. Whether it will ever fully embody itself in a bridal train of a dozen stanzas or not is uncertain; but it exists potentially from the instant that the poet turns pale with it. It is enough to stun and scare anybody, to have a hot thought come crashing into his brain, and ploughing up those parallel ruts where the wagon trains of common ideas were jogging along in their regular sequences of association. No wonder the ancients made the poetical impulse wholly external. *Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά*. Goddess,—Muse,—divine afflatus, something outside always. *I* never wrote any verses worth reading. I can't. I am too stupid. If I ever copied any that were worth reading, I was only a medium.

[I was talking all this time to our boarders, you understand,—telling them what this poet told me. The company listened rather attentively, I thought, considering the literary character of the remarks.]

The old gentleman opposite all at once asked me if I ever read any thing better than Pope's "Essay on Man"? Had I ever perused McFingal? He was fond of poetry when he was a boy,—his mother taught him to say many little pieces,—he remembered one beautiful hymn; and the old gentleman began, in a clear, loud voice, for his years,—

"The spacious firmament on high,  
With all the blue ethereal sky,  
And spangled heavens,"—

he stopped, as if startled by our silence, and a faint flush ran up beneath the thin white hairs that fell upon his cheek. As I looked round, I was reminded of a show I once saw at the Museum,—the Sleeping Beauty, I think they called it. The old man's sudden breaking out in this way turned every face towards him, and each kept his posture as if changed to stone. Our Celtic Bridget, or Biddy, is not a foolish fat scullion, to burst out crying for a sentiment. She is of the serviceable, red-handed, broad-and-high-shouldered type; one of those imported female servants who are known in public by their amorphous style of person, their stoop forwards, and a headlong and as it were precipitous walk,—the waist plunging downwards into the rocking pelvis at every heavy footfall. Bridget, constituted for action, not for emotion, was about to deposit a plate heaped with something upon the table, when I saw the coarse arm stretched by my shoulder arrested,—motionless as the arm of a terra-cotta caryatid; she couldn't set the plate down while the old gentleman was speaking!

He was quite silent after this, still wearing the slight flush on his cheek. Don't ever think the poetry is dead in an old man



because his forehead is wrinkled, or that his manhood has left him when his hand trembles ! If they ever *were* there, they *are* there still !

By and by we got talking again.—Does a poet love the verses written through him, do you think, sir ? said the divinity-student.

So long as they are warm from his mind, carry any of his animal heat about them, *I know* he loves them, I answered. When they have had time to cool, he is more indifferent.

A good deal as it is with buckwheat cakes, said the young fellow whom they call John.

The last words only reached the ear of the economically organised female in black bombazine.—Buckwheat is skerce and high, she remarked. [Must be a poor relation sponging on our landlady,—pays nothing,—so she must stand by the guns and be ready to repel boarders.]

I liked the turn the conversation had taken, for I had some things I wanted to say, and so, after waiting a minute, I began again.—I don't think the poems I read you sometimes can be fairly appreciated, given to you as they are in the green state.—

You don't know what I mean by the *green state* ? Well, then, I will tell you. Certain things are good for nothing until they have been kept a long while ; and some are good for nothing until they have been long kept and *used*. Of the first, wine is the illustrious and immortal example. Of those which must be kept and used I will name three,—meerschaum pipes, violins, and poems. The meerschaum is but a poor affair until it has burned a thousand offerings to the cloud-compelling deities. It comes to us without complexion or flavor,—born of the sea-foam, like Aphrodite, but colourless as *pallida Mors* herself. The fire is lighted in its central shrine, and gradually the juices which the broad leaves of the Great Vegetable had sucked up from an acre and curdled into a drachm are diffused through its thirsting pores. First a discoloration, then a stain, and at last a rich, glowing, umber tint spreading over the whole surface. Nature true to her old brown autumnal hue, you see,—as true in the fire of the meerschaum as in the sunshine of October ! And then the cumulative wealth of its fragrant reminiscences ! he who inhales its vapours takes a thousand whiffs in a single breath ; and one cannot touch it without awakening the old joys that hang around it as the smell of flowers clings to the dresses of the daughters of the house of Farina !

[Don't think I use a meerschaum myself, for *I do not*, though I have owned a calumet since my childhood, which from a naked Pict (of the Mohawk species) my grandsire won, together with a tomahawk and beaded knife-sheath ; paying for the lot with a bullet-mark on his right cheek. On the maternal side I inherit the loveliest silver-mounted tobacco-stopper you ever saw. It is a little box-wood Triton, carved with charming liveliness and truth ; I have often compared it to a figure in Raphael's "Triumph

of Galatea." It came to me in an ancient shagreen case,—how old it is I do not know,—but it must have been made since Sir Walter Raleigh's time. If you are curious, you shall see it any day. Neither will I pretend that I am so unused to the more perishable smoking contrivance that a few whiffs would make me feel as if I lay in a ground-swell on the Bay of Biscay. I am not unacquainted with that fusiform, spiral-wound bundle of chopped stems and miscellaneous incombustibles, the *cigar*, so called, of the shops,—which to "draw" asks the suction-power of a nursing infant Hercules, and to relish, the leathery palate of an old Silenus. I do not advise you, young man, even if my illustration strike your fancy, to consecrate the flower of your life to painting the bowl of a pipe, for, let me assure you, the stain of a reverie-breeding narcotic may strike deeper than you think for. I have seen the green leaf of early promise grow brown before its time under such Nicotian regimen, and thought the umbered meerschaum was dearly bought at the cost of a brain enfeebled and a will enslaved.]

Violins, too,—the sweet old Amati!—the divine Stradivarius! Played on by eminent *maestros* until the bow-hand lost its power and the flying fingers stiffened. Bequeathed to the passionate young enthusiast, who made it whisper his hidden love, and cry his inarticulate longings, and scream his untold agonies, and wail his monotonous despair. Passed from his dying hand to the cold *virtuoso*, who let it slumber in its case for a generation, till, when his hoard was broken up, it came forth once more and rode the stormy symphonies of royal orchestras, beneath the rushing bow of their lord and leader. Into lonely prisons with improvident artists; into convents from which arose, day and night, the holy hymns with which its tones were blended; and back again to orgies in which it learned to howl and laugh as if a legion of devils were shut up in it; then again to the gentle *dilettante*, who calmed it down with easy melodies until it answered him softly as in the days of the old *maestros*. And so given into our hands, its pores all full of music: stained, like the meerschaum, through and through, with the concentrated hue and sweetness of all the harmonies which have kindled and faded on its strings.

Now I tell you a poem must be kept *and used*, like a meerschaum, or a violin. A poem is just as porous as the meerschaum;—the more porous it is, the better. I mean to say that a genuine poem is capable of absorbing an indefinite amount of the essence of our own humanity,—its tenderness, its heroism, its regrets, its aspirations, so as to be gradually stained through with a divine secondary colour derived from ourselves. So you see it must take time to bring the sentiment of a poem into harmony with our nature, by staining ourselves through every thought and image our being can penetrate.

Then again as to the mere music of a new poem; why, who can expect anything more from that than from the music of a

violin fresh from the maker's hand? Now you know very well that there are no less than fifty-eight pieces in a violin. These pieces are strangers to each other, and it takes a century, more or less, to make them thoroughly acquainted. At last they learn to vibrate in harmony, and the instrument becomes an organic whole, as if it were a great seed-capsule which had grown from a garden-bed in Cremona, or elsewhere. Besides, the wood is juicy and full of sap for fifty years or so; but at the end of fifty or a hundred more gets tolerably dry and comparatively resonant.

Don't you see that all this is just as true of a poem? Counting each word as a piece, there are more pieces in an average copy of verses than in a violin. The poet has forced all these words together, and fastened them, and they don't understand it at first. But let the poem be repeated aloud and murmured over in the mind's muffled whisper often enough, and at length the parts become knit together in such absolute solidarity, that you could not change a syllable without the whole world's crying out against you for meddling with the harmonious fabric. Observe, too, how the drying process takes place in the stuff of a poem just as in that of a violin. Here is a Tyrolese fiddle that is just coming to its hundredth birthday (Pedro Klauss, Tyroli, fecit, 1760): the sap is pretty well out of it. And here is the song of an old poet whom Neæra cheated:—

“Nox erat, et cœlo fulgebat Luna sereno  
Inter minora sidera,  
Cum tu magnorum numen læsura deorum  
In verba jurabas mea.”

Don't you perceive the sonorousness of these old dead Latin phrases? Now I tell you that every word fresh from the dictionary brings with it a certain succulence; and though I cannot expect the sheets of the *Pactolian*, in which, as I told you, I sometimes print my verse, to get so dry as the crisp papyrus that held those words of Horatius Flaccus, yet you may be sure that, while the sheets are damp, and while the lines hold their sap, you can't fairly judge of my performances, and that, if made of the true stuff, they will ring better after a while.

[There was silence for a brief space, after my somewhat elaborate exposition of these self-evident analogies. Presently a person turned towards me—I do not choose to designate the individual—and said that he rather expected my pieces had given pretty good “sahtisfahction.” I had, up to this moment, considered this complimentary phrase as sacred to the use of secretaries of lyceums, and, as it has been usually accompanied by a small pecuniary testimonial, have acquired a certain relish for this moderately tepid and unstimulating expression of enthusiasm. But as a reward for gratuitous services, I confess I thought it a little below that blood-heat standard which a man's breath ought to have, whether silent or vocal and articulate. I waited

for a favourable opportunity, however, before making the remarks which follow.]—

There are single expressions, as I have told you already, that fix a man's position for you before you have done shaking hands with him. Allow me to expand a little. There are several things, very slight in themselves, yet implying other things not so unimportant. Thus your French servant has *dévalisé* your premises and got caught. *Excusez*, says the *sergent-de-ville*, as he politely relieves him of his upper garments and displays his bust in the full daylight. Good shoulders enough—a little marked, traces of small-pox, perhaps—but white. . . . . *Crac!* from the *sergent-de-ville's* broad palm on the white shoulder! Now look! *Vogue la galère!* Out comes the big red V—mark of the hot iron—he had blistered it out pretty nearly—hadn't he?—the old rascal VOLEUR, branded in the galleys at Marseilles! [Don't! What if he has got something like this?—nobody supposes I *invented* such a story.]

My man John, who used to drive two of those six equine females which I told you I had owned—for look you, my friends, simple though I stand here, I am one that has been driven in his “kerridge”—not using that term, as liberal shepherds do, for any battered old shabby-genteel go-cart which has more than one wheel, but meaning thereby a four-wheeled vehicle *with a pole*—my man John, I say was a retired soldier. He retired unostentatiously, as many of her Majesty's modest servants have done before and since. John told me that when an officer thinks he recognises one of these retiring heroes, and would know if he has really been in the service, that he may restore him, if possible, to a grateful country, he comes suddenly upon him, and says sharply, “Strap!” If he has ever worn the shoulder-strap, he has learned the reprimand for its ill adjustment. The old word of command flashes through his muscles, and his hand goes up in an instant to the place where the strap used to be.

[I was all the time preparing for my grand *coup*, you understand; but I saw they were not quite ready for it, and so continued—always in illustration of the general principle I had laid down.]

Yes, odd things come out in ways that nobody thinks of. There was a legend that when the Danish pirates made descents upon the English coast, they caught a few Tartars occasionally, in the shape of Saxons, who would not let them go; on the contrary, insisted on their staying, and, to make sure of it, treated them as Apollo treated Marsyas, or as Bartholinus has treated a fellow-creature in his title-page, and having divested them of the one essential and perfectly fitting garment, indispensable in the mildest climates, nailed the same on the church-door as we do the banns of marriage, *in terrorem*.

[There was a laugh at this among some of the young folks;

but as I looked at our landlady, I saw that "the water stood in her eyes," as it did in Christiana's when the interpreter asked her about the spider, and I fancied, but wasn't quite sure, that the schoolmistress blushed, as Mercy did in the same conversation, as you remember.]

That sounds like a cock-and-bull story, said the young fellow whom they call John. I abstained from making Hamlet's remark to Horatio, and continued.

Not long since the churchwardens were repairing and beautifying an old Saxon church in a certain English village, and among other things thought the doors should be attended to. One of them particularly, the front door, looked very badly, crusted, as it were, and as if it would be all the better for scraping. There happened to be a microscopist in the village who had heard the old pirate story, and he took it into his head to examine the crust on this door. There was no mistake about it; it was a genuine historical document, of the Ziska drum-head pattern—a real *cutis humana*, stripped from some old Scandinavian filibuster—and the legend was true.

My friend the Professor settled an important historical and financial question once by the aid of an exceedingly minute fragment of a similar document. Behind the pane of plate-glass which bore his name and title burned a modest lamp, signifying to the passers-by that at all hours of the night the slightest favours (or fevers) were welcome. A youth who had freely partaken of the cup which cheers and likewise inebriates, following a moth-like impulse very natural under the circumstances, dashed his fist at the light, and quenched the meek luminary, breaking through the plate-glass, of course, to reach it. Now I don't want to go into *minutiæ* at table, you know, but a naked hand can no more go through a pane of thick glass without leaving some of its cuticle, to say the least, behind it, than a butterfly can go through a sausage-machine without looking the worse for it. The Professor gathered up the fragments of glass, and with them certain very minute but entirely satisfactory documents which would have identified and hanged any rogue in Christendom who had parted with them. The historical question, *Who did it?* and the financial question, *Who paid for it?* were both settled before the new lamp was lighted the next evening.

You see, my friends, what immense conclusions, touching our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honour, may be reached by means of very insignificant premises. This is eminently true of manners and forms of speech; a movement or a phrase often tells you all you want to know about a person. Thus, "How's your health?" (commonly pronounced *haälth*), instead of, How do you do? or, How are you? Or calling your little dark entry a "hall," and your old rickety one-horse waggon a "kerridge." Or telling a person who has been trying to please you that he

has given you pretty good sahtisfahction." Or saying that you "remember of" such a thing, or that you have been "stoppin'" at Deacon Somebody's—and other such expressions. One of my friends had a little marble statuette of Cupid in the parlour of his country-house—bow, arrows, wings, and all complete. A visitor indigenous to the region, looking pensively at the figure, asked the lady of the house "if that was a statoo of her deceased infant?" What a delicious, though somewhat voluminous biography, social, educational, and æsthetic, in that brief question!

[Please observe with what Machiavellian astuteness I smuggled in the particular offence which it was my object to hold up to my fellow-boarders, without too personal an attack on the individual at whose door it lay.]

That was an exceedingly dull person who made the remark, *Ex pede Herculem*. He might as well have said, "From a peck of apples you may judge of the barrel." *Ex PEDE*, to be sure! Read, instead, *Ex ungue minimi digiti pedis, Herculem, ejusque patrem, matrem, avos et proavos, filios, nepotes et pronepotes!* Talk to me about your ὁδὸς ποῦ στῶ! Tell me about Cuvier's getting up a megatherium from a tooth, or Agassiz's drawing a portrait of an undiscovered fish from a single scale! As the "O" revealed Giotto,—as the one word "moi" betrayed the Stratford-atte-Bowe-taught Anglais, so all a man's antecedents and possibilities are summed up in a single utterance which gives at once the gauge of his education and his mental organisation.

Possibilities, sir?—said the divinity-student; can't a man who says *Haöw?* arrive at distinction?

Sir,—I replied,—in a republic all things are possible. But the man *with a future* has almost of necessity sense enough to see that any odious trick of speech or manners must be got rid of. Doesn't Sydney Smith say that a public man in England never gets over a false quantity uttered in early life? *Our* public men are in little danger of this fatal misstep, as few of them are in the habit of introducing Latin into their speeches,—for good and sufficient reasons. But they are bound to speak decent English,—unless, indeed, they are rough old campaigners, like General Jackson or General Taylor; in which case, a few scars on Priscian's head are pardoned to old fellows who have quite as many on their own, and a constituency of thirty empires is not at all particular, provided they do not swear in their Presidential Messages.

However, it is not for me to talk. I have made mistakes enough in conversation and print. I never find them out until they are stereotyped, and then I think they rarely escape me. I have no doubt I shall make half a dozen slips before this breakfast is over, and remember them all before another. How one does tremble with rage at his own intense momentary stupidity

about things he knows perfectly well, and to think how he lays himself open to the impertinences of the *captatores verborum*, those useful but humble scavengers of the language, whose business it is to pick up what might offend or injure, and remove it, hugging and feeding on it as they go! I don't want to speak too slightly of these verbal critics;—how can I, who am so fond of talking about errors and vulgarisms of speech? Only there is a difference between those clerical blunders which almost every man commits, knowing better, and that habitual grossness or meanness of speech which is unendurable to educated persons, from any body that wears silk or broadcloth.

[I write down the above remarks this morning, January 26th, making this record of the date that nobody may think it was written in wrath, on account of any particular grievance suffered from the invasion of any individual *scarabæus grammaticus*.]—

I wonder if any body ever finds fault with any thing I say at this table when it is repeated? I hope they do, I am sure. I should be very certain that I said nothing of much significance, if they did not.

Did you never, in walking in the fields, come across a large flat stone, which had lain, nobody knows how long, just where you found it, with the grass forming a little hedge, as it were, all round it, close to its edges,—and have you not, in obedience to a kind of feeling that told you it had been lying there long enough, insinuated your stick or your foot or your fingers under its edge and turned it over as a housewife turns a cake, when she says to herself, “It's done brown enough by this time”? What an odd revelation, and what an unforeseen and unpleasant surprise to a small community, the very existence of which you had not suspected, until the sudden dismay and scattering among its members produced by your turning the old stone over! Blades of grass flattened down, colourless, matted together, as if they had been bleached and ironed; hideous crawling creatures, some of them coleopterous or horny-shelled,—turtle-bugs one wants to call them; some of them softer, but cunningly spread out and compressed like Lepine watches (Nature never loses a crack or a crevice, mind you, or a joint in a tavern bedstead, but she always has one of her flat-pattern live time-keepers to slide into it); black, glossy crickets, with their long filaments sticking out like the whips of four-horse stage-coaches; motionless, slug-like creatures, young larvæ, perhaps more horrible in their pulpy stillness than even in the infernal wriggle of maturity! But no sooner is the stone turned and the wholesome light of day let upon this compressed and blinded community of creeping things, than all of them which enjoy the luxury of legs—and some of them have a good many—rush round wildly, butting each other and every thing in their way, and end in a general stampede for underground retreats from the region poisoned by sunshine. *Next year* you will find



the grass growing tall and green where the stone lay; the ground-bird builds her nest where the beetle had his hole; the dandelion and the buttercup are growing there, and the broad fans of insect-angels open and shut over their golden disks, as the rhythmic waves of blissful consciousness pulsate through their glorified being.—

The young fellow whom they call John saw fit to say, in his very familiar way,—at which I do not choose to take offence, but which I sometimes think it necessary to repress,—that I was coming it rather strong on the butterflies.

No, I replied; there is meaning in each of those images,—the butterfly as well as the others. The stone is ancient error. The grass is human nature borne down and bleached of all its colour by it. The shapes which are found beneath are the crafty beings that thrive in darkness, and the weaker organisms kept helpless by it. He who turns the stone over is whosoever puts the staff of truth to the old lying incubus, no matter whether he do it with a serious face or a laughing one. The next year stands for the coming time. Then shall the nature which had lain blanched and broken rise in its full stature and native hues in the sunshine. Then shall God's minstrels build their nests in the hearts of a new-born humanity. Then shall beauty—Divinity taking outlines and colour—light upon the souls of men as the butterfly, image of the beatified spirit rising from the dust, soars from the shell that held a poor grub, which would never have found wings, had not the stone been lifted.

You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it.—

Every real thought on every real subject knocks the wind out of somebody or other. As soon as his breath comes back, he very probably begins to expend it in hard words. These are the best evidence a man can have that he has said something it was time to say. Dr. Johnson was disappointed in the effect of one of his pamphlets. "I think I have not been attacked enough for it," he said;—"attack is the reaction; I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds."—

If a fellow attacked my opinions in print, would I reply? Not I. Do you think I don't understand what my friend the Professor long ago called *the hydrostatic paradox of controversy*?

Don't know what that means? Well, I will tell you. You know that, if you had a bent tube, one arm of which was of the size of a pipe-stem, and the other big enough to hold the ocean, water would stand at the same height in one as in the other. Controversy equalises fools and wise men in the same way—and *the fools know it*.—

No, but I often read what they say about other people. There are about a dozen phrases which all come tumbling along together, like the tongs, and the shovel, and the poker, and the brush, and



the bellows, in one of those domestic avalanches that everybody knows. If you get one, you get the whole lot.

What are they? Oh, that depends a good deal on latitude and longitude. Epithets follow the isothermal lines pretty accurately. Grouping them in two families, one finds himself a clever, genial, witty, wise, brilliant, sparkling, thoughtful, distinguished, celebrated, illustrious scholar, and perfect gentleman, and first writer of the age; or a dull, foolish, wicked, pert, shallow, ignorant, insolent, traitorous, black-hearted outcast, and disgrace to civilisation.

What do I think determines the set of phrases a man gets? Well, I should say a set of influences something like these:—1st. Relationships, political, religious, social, domestic. 2nd. Oysters, in the form of suppers given to gentlemen connected with criticism. I believe in the school, the college, and the clergy; but my sovereign logic for regulating public opinion—which means commonly the opinion of half a dozen of the critical gentry—is the following *Major proposition*. Oysters *au naturel*. *Minor proposition*. The same “scalloped.” *Conclusion*. That——(here insert entertainer’s name) is clever, witty, wise, brilliant, and the rest.

No, it isn’t exactly bribery. One man has oysters, and another epithets. It is an exchange of hospitalities; one gives a “spread” on linen, and the other on paper—that is all. Don’t you think you and I should be apt to do just so, if we were in the critical line? I am sure I couldn’t resist the softening influences of hospitality. I don’t like to dine out, you know—I dine so well at our own table [our landlady looked radiant], and the company is so pleasant [a rustling movement of satisfaction among the boarders]; but if I did partake of a man’s salt, with such additions as that article of food requires to make it palatable, I could never abuse him, and if I had to speak of him, I suppose I should hang my set of jingling epithets round him like a string of sleigh-bells. Good feeling helps society to make liars of most of us—not absolute liars, but such careless handlers of truth, that its sharp corners get terribly rounded. I love truth as chiefest among the virtues; I trust it runs in my blood; but I would never be a critic, because I know I could not always tell it. I might write a criticism of a book that happened to please me; that is another matter.

Listen, Benjamin Franklin! This is for you, and such others of tender age as you may tell it to.

When we are as yet small children, long before the time when those two grown ladies offer us the choice of Hercules, there comes up to us a youthful angel, holding in his right hand cubes like dice, and in his left, spheres like marbles. The cubes are of stainless ivory, and on each is written in letters of gold—TRUTH. The spheres are veined and streaked and spotted beneath, with a dark crimson flush above, where the light falls

### THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

on them, and in a certain aspect you can make out upon every one of them the three letters, L, I, E. The child to whom they are offered very probably clutches at both. The spheres are the most convenient things in the world; they roll with the least possible impulse just where the child would have them. The cubes will not roll at all; they have a great talent for standing still, and always keep right side up. But very soon the young philosopher finds that things which roll so easily are very apt to roll into the wrong corner, and to get out of his way when he most wants them, while he always knows where to find the others, which stay where they are left. Thus he learns—thus we learn—to drop the streaked and speckled globes of falsehood, and to hold fast the white angular blocks of truth. But then comes Timidity, and after her Good-nature, and last of all Polite-behaviour, all insisting that truth must *roll*, or nobody can do anything with it; and so the first with her coarse rasp, and the second with her broad file, and the third with her silken sleeve, do so round off and smooth and polish the snow-white cubes of truth, that, when they have got a little dingy by use, it becomes hard to tell them from the rolling spheres of falsehood.

The schoolmistress was polite enough to say that she was pleased with this, and that she would read it to her little flock the next day. But she should tell the children, she said, that there were better reasons for truth than could be found in mere experience of its convenience, and the inconvenience of lying.

Yes—I said—but education always begins through the senses, and works up to the idea of absolute right and wrong. The first thing a child has to learn about this matter is, that lying is unprofitable—afterwards, that it is against the peace and dignity of the universe.

Do I think that the particular form of lying often seen in newspapers; under the title, “From our Foreign Correspondent,” does any harm? Why, no, I don’t know that it does. I suppose it doesn’t really deceive people any more than the *Arabian Nights* or *Gulliver’s Travels* do. Sometimes the writers compile *too* carelessly, though, and mix up facts out of geographies, and stories out of the penny papers, so as to mislead those who are desirous of information. I cut a piece out of one of the papers, the other day, which contains a number of improbabilities, and, I suspect, misstatements. I will send up and get it for you, if you would like to hear it. Ah, this is it; it is headed—

#### “OUR SUMATRA CORRESPONDENCE.

“This island is now the property of the Stamford family—having been won, it is said, in a raffle, by Sir — Stamford, during the stock-gambling mania of the South-Sea Scheme. The history of this gentleman may be found in an interesting

series of questions (unfortunately not yet answered) contained in the 'Notes and Queries.' This island is entirely surrounded by the ocean, which here contains a large amount of saline substance, crystallising in cubes remarkable for their symmetry, and frequently displays on its surface, during calm weather, the rainbow tints of the celebrated South-Sea bubbles. The summers are oppressively hot, and the winters very probably cold : but this fact cannot be ascertained precisely, as, for some peculiar reason, the mercury in these latitudes never shrinks, as in more northern regions, and thus the thermometer is rendered useless in winter.

"The principal vegetable productions of the island are the pepper-tree and the bread-fruit-tree. Pepper being very abundantly produced, a benevolent society was organised in London during the last century for supplying the natives with vinegar and oysters, as an addition to that delightful condiment. [Note received from Dr. D. P.] It is said, however, that, as the oysters were of the kind called *natives* in England, the natives of Sumatra, in obedience to a natural instinct, refused to touch them, and confined themselves entirely to the crew of the vessel in which they were brought over. This information was received from one of the oldest inhabitants, a native himself, and exceedingly fond of missionaries. He is said also to be very skilful in the *cuisine* peculiar to the island.

"During the season of gathering the pepper, the persons employed are subject to various incommodities, the chief of which is violent and long-continued sternutation or sneezing. Such is the vehemence of these attacks, that the unfortunate subjects of them are often driven backwards for great distances at immense speed, on the well-known principle of the æolipile. Not being able to see where they are going, these poor creatures dash themselves to pieces against the rocks or are precipitated over the cliffs, and thus many valuable lives are lost annually. As, during the whole pepper-harvest, they feed exclusively on this stimulant, they become exceedingly irritable. The smallest injury is resented with ungovernable rage. A young man suffering from the *pepper-fever*, as it is called, cudgelled another most severely for appropriating a superannuated relative of trifling value, and was only pacified by having a present made him of a pig of that peculiar species of swine called the *Peccavi* by the Catholic Jews, who, it is well known, abstain from swine's flesh in imitation of the Mahometan Buddhists.

"The bread-tree grows abundantly. Its branches are well known to Europe and America under the familiar name of *maccaroni*. The smaller twigs are called *vermicelli*. They have a decided animal flavour, as may be observed in the soups containing them. Maccaroni, being tubular, is the favourite habitat of a very dangerous insect, which is rendered peculiarly ferocious by being boiled. The government of the island, therefore

never allows a stick of it to be exported without being accompanied by a piston with which its cavity may at any time be thoroughly swept out. These are commonly lost or stolen before the macaroni arrives among us. It therefore always contains many of these insects, which, however, generally die of old age in the shops, so that accidents from this source are comparatively rare.

"The fruit of the bread-tree consists principally of hot rolls. The buttered-muffin variety is supposed to be a hybrid with the cocoa-nut palm, the cream found on the milk of the cocoa-nut exuding from the hybrid in the shape of butter, just as the ripe fruit is splitting, so as to fit it for the tea-table, where it is commonly served up with cold——"

There,—I don't want to read any more of it. You see that many of these statements are highly improbable.—No, I shall not mention the paper.—No, neither of them wrote it, though it reminds me of the style of these popular writers. I think the fellow who wrote it must have been reading some of their stories, and got them mixed up with his history and geography. I don't suppose *he* lies ;—he sells it to the editor, who knows how many squares off "Sumatra" is. The editor, who sells it to the public——By the way, the papers have been very civil—haven't they ?—to the—the—what d'ye call it?—*Northern Magazine*,—isn't it?—got up by some of those Come-outers, down East, as an organ for their local peculiarities.—

The Professor has been to see me. Came in, glorious, at about twelve o'clock last night. Said he had been with "the boys." On inquiry found that "the boys" were certain baldish and grayish old gentlemen that one sees or hears of in various important stations of society. The Professor is one of the same set, but he always talks as if he had been out of college about ten years, whereas . . . . . [Each of these dots was a little nod, which the company understood, as the reader will, no doubt.] He calls them sometimes "the boys," and sometimes "the old fellows." Call him by the latter title, and see how he likes it.—Well, he came in last night glorious, as I was saying. Of course I don't mean vinously exalted ; he drinks little wine on such occasions, and is well known to all the Peters and Patricks as the gentleman who always has indefinite quantities of black tea to kill any extra glass of red claret he may have swallowed. But the Professor says he always gets tipsy on old memories at these gatherings. He was I forget how many years old when he went to the meeting ; just turned of twenty now,—he said. He made various useful proposals to me, including a duet under the landlady's daughter's window. He had just learned a trick, he said, of one of "the boys," of getting a splendid bass out of a door-panel by rubbing it with the palm of his hand. Offered to sing "The sky is bright," accompanying himself on the front-door, if I would go down and help in the chorus. Said there never was

such a set of fellows as the old boys of the set he has been with. Judges, mayors, Congressmen, Mr. Speakers, leaders in science, clergymen better than famous, and famous too, poets by the half-dozen, singers with voices like angels, financiers, wits, three of the best laughers in the Commonwealth, engineers, agriculturists,—all forms of talent and knowledge, he pretended, were represented in that meeting. Then he began to quote Byron about Santa Croce, and maintained that he could “furnish out creation” in all its details from that set of his. He would like to have the whole boodle of them (I remonstrated against this word, but the Professor said it was a diabolish good word, and he would have no other), with their wives and children, shipwrecked on a remote island, just to see how splendidly they would reorganise society. They could build a city,—they have done it; make constitutions and laws; establish churches and lyceums; teach and practice the healing art; instruct in every department; found observatories; create commerce and manufactures; write songs and hymns, and sing ’em, and make instruments to accompany the songs with; lastly, publish a journal almost as good as the *Northern Magazine*, edited by the Come-outers. There was nothing they were not up to, from a christening to a hanging; the last, to be sure, could never be called for, unless some stranger got in among them.—

I let the Professor talk as long as he liked; it didn’t make much difference to me whether it was all truth, or partly made up of pale sherry and similar elements. All at once he jumped up and said,—

Don’t you want to hear what I just read to the boys?

I have had questions of a similar character asked me before, occasionally. A man of iron mould might perhaps say, No! I am not a man of iron mould, and said that I should be delighted.

The Professor then read—with that slightly sing-song cadence which is observed to be common in poets reading their own verses—the following stanzas; holding them at a focal distance of about two feet and a half, with an occasional movement back or forward for better adjustment, the appearance of which has been likened by some impertinent young folks to that of the act of playing on the trombone. His eyesight was never better; I have his word for it.

#### MARE RUBRUM.

Flash out a stream of blood-red wine!  
 For I would drink to other days;  
 And brighter shall their memory shine,  
 Seen flaming through its crimson blaze.  
 The roses die, the summers fade;  
 But every ghost of boyhood’s dream  
 By Nature’s magic power is laid  
 To sleep beneath this blood-red stream.

It filled the purple grapes that lay  
 And drank the splendours of the sun  
 Where the long summer's cloudless day  
 Is mirrored in the broad Garonne ;  
 It pictures still the bacchant shapes  
 That saw their hoarded sunlight shed,  
 The maidens dancing on the grapes,  
 Their milk-white ankles splashed with red.

Beneath these waves of crimson lie,  
 In rosy fetters prisoned fast,  
 Those flitting shapes that never die,  
 The swift-winged visions of the past.  
 Kiss but the crystal's mystic rim,  
 Each shadow rends its flowery chain,  
 Springs in a bubble from its brim,  
 And walks the chambers of the brain.

Poor Beauty ! time and fortune's wrong  
 No form nor feature may withstand,—  
 Thy wrecks are scattered all along,  
 Like emptied sea-shells on the sand ;—  
 Yet, sprinkled with this blushing rain,  
 The dust restores each blooming girl,  
 As if the sea-shells moved again  
 Their glistening lips of pink and pearl.

Here lies the home of schoolboy life,  
 With creaking stair and wind-swept hall,  
 And scarred by many a truant knife,  
 Our old initials on the wall ;  
 Here rest—their keen vibrations mute—  
 The shout of voices known so well,  
 The ringing laugh, the wailing flute,  
 The chiding of the sharp-tongue bell.

Here, clad in burning robes, are laid  
 Life's blossomed joys, untimely shed ;  
 And here those cherished forms have strayed  
 We miss awhile, and call them dead.  
 What wizard fills the maddening glass ?  
 What soil the enchanted clusters grew,  
 That buried passions wake and pass  
 In beaded drops of fiery dew ?

Nay, take the cup of blood-red wine,—  
 Our hearts can boast a warmer glow,  
 Filled from a vintage more divine,—  
 Calmed, but not chilled by winter's snow !  
 To-night the palest wave we sip  
 Rich as the priceless draught shall be  
 That wet the bride of Cana's lip,—  
 The wedding wine of Galilee !

## VI.

SIN has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all.

I think, sir—said the divinity-student—you must intend that for one of the sayings of the Seven Wise Men of Boston you were speaking of the other day.

I thank you my young friend—was my reply—but I must say something better than that before I could pretend to fill out the number.

The schoolmistress wanted to know how many of these sayings there were on record, and what, and by whom said.

Why, let us see—there is that one of Benjamin Franklin, “the great Bostonian,” after whom this lad was named. To be sure, he said a great many wise things—and I don’t feel sure he didn’t borrow this—he speaks as if it were old. But then he applied it so neatly !

“He that has once done you a kindness will be more ready to do you another than he whom you yourself have obliged.”

Then there is that glorious Epicurean paradox, uttered by my friend the Historian, in one of his flashing moments :—

“Give us the luxuries of life, and we will dispense with its necessities.”

To these must certainly be added that other saying of one of the wittiest of men.

“Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris.”

The divinity-student looked grave at this, but said nothing.

The schoolmistress spoke out, and said she didn’t think the wit meant any irreverence. It was only another way of saying, Paris is a heavenly place after New York or Boston.

A jaunty-looking person, who had come in with the young fellow they call John—evidently a stranger—said there was one more wise man’s saying that he had heard : it was about our place, but he didn’t know who said it. A civil curiosity was manifested by the company to hear the fourth wise saying. I heard him distinctly whispering to the young fellow who brought him to dinner, *Shall I tell it ?* To which the answer was, *Go ahead !* Well—he said—this is what I heard :

“Boston State-House is the hub of the solar system. You couldn’t pry that out of a Boston man, if you had the tire of all creation straightened out for a crowbar.”

Sir—said I—I am gratified with your remark. It expresses with pleasing vivacity that which I have sometimes heard uttered with malignant dulness. The satire of the remark is essentially true of Boston, and of all other considerable and inconsiderable places with which I have had the privilege of being acquainted. Cockneys think London is the only place in the world. Frenchmen—you remember the line about Paris, the Court, the World, etc. I recollect well, by the way, a sign in that city which ran thus : “Hôtel de l’Univers et des Etats Unis ;” and, as Paris is the universe to a Frenchman, of course the United States are outside of it. “See Naples and then die.” It is quite as bad with smaller places. I have been about lecturing, you know, and have found the following propositions to hold true of all of them :—



1. The axis of the earth sticks out visibly through the centre of each and every town or city.

2. If more than fifty years have passed since its foundation, it is affectionately styled by the inhabitants the "*good old town of*" — (whatever its name may happen to be).

3. Every collection of its inhabitants that comes together to listen to a stranger is invariably declared to be a "remarkably intelligent audience."

4. The climate of the place is particularly favourable to longevity.

5. It contains several persons of vast talent little known to the world. (One or two of them, you may perhaps chance to remember, sent short pieces to the *Pactolian* some time since, which were "respectfully declined.")

Boston is just like other places of its size—only, perhaps, considering its excellent fish-market, paid fire-department, superior monthly publications, and correct habit of spelling the English language, it has some right to look down on the mob of cities. I'll tell you, though, if you want to know it, what is the real offence of Boston. It drains a large water-shed of its intellect, and will not itself be drained. If it would only send away its first-rate men, instead of its second-rate ones (no offence to the well-known exceptions, of which we are always proud), we should be spared such epigrammatic remarks as that which the gentleman has quoted. There can never be a real metropolis in this country until the biggest centre can drain the lesser ones of their talent and wealth. I have observed, by the way, that the people who really live in two great cities are by no means so jealous of each other as are those of smaller cities situated within the intellectual basin, or *suction-range*, of one large one, of the pretensions of any other. Don't you see why? Because their promising young author and rising lawyer and large capitalist have been drained off to the neighbouring big city—their prettiest girl has been exported to the same market; all their ambition points there, and all their thin gilding of glory comes from there. I hate little toad-eating cities.—

Would I be so good as to specify any particular example?—Oh, an example? Did you ever see a bear-trap? Never? Well, shouldn't you like to see me put my foot into one? With sentiments of the highest consideration I must beg leave to be excused.

Besides, some of the smaller cities are charming. If they have an old church or two, a few stately mansions of former grandees, here and there an old dwelling with the second storey projecting (for the convenience of shooting the Indians knocking at the front door with their tomahawks)—if they have, scattered about, those mighty square houses built something more than half a century ago, and standing like architectural boulders dropped by the former diluvium of wealth, whose reflux wave has left them



as its monument—if they have gardens with elbowed apple-trees that push their branches over the high board-fence and drop their fruit on the sidewalk—if they have a little grass in the side-streets, enough to betoken quiet without proclaiming decay—I think I could go to pieces, after my life's work were done, in one of those tranquil places, as sweetly as in any cradle that an old man may be rocked to sleep in. I visit such spots always with infinite delight. My friend the Poet says, that rapidly growing towns are most unfavourable to the imaginative and reflective faculties. Let a man live in one of these old, quiet places, he says, and the wine of his soul, which is kept thick and turbid by the rattle of busy streets, settles, and, as you hold it up, you may see the sun through it by day, and the stars by night.—

Do I think that the little villages have the conceit of the great towns?—I don't believe there is much difference. You know how they read Pope's line in the smallest town in our State of Massachusetts? Well, they read it—

“ All are but parts of one stupendous HULL!”

Every person's feelings have a front-door and a side-door by which they may be entered. The front-door is on the street. Some keep it always open; some keep it latched; some, locked; some bolted, with a chain that will let you peep in, but not get in; and some nail it up, so that nothing can pass its threshold. This front-door leads into a passage which opens into an ante-room, and this into the interior apartments. The side-door opens at once into the sacred chambers.

There is almost always at least one key to this side-door. This is carried for years hidden in a mother's bosom. Fathers, brothers, sisters, and friends, often, but by no means so universally, have duplicates of it. The wedding-ring conveys a right to one; alas, if none is given with it!

If nature or accident has put one of these keys into the hands of a person who has the torturing instinct, I can only solemnly pronounce the words that Justice utters over its doomed victim,—*The Lord have mercy on your soul!* You will probably go mad within a reasonable time,—or, if you are a man, run off and die with your head upon a curbstone, in Melbourne or San Francisco,—or, if you are a woman, quarrel and break your heart, or turn into a pale, jointed petrification that moves about as if it were alive, or plays some real life-tragedy or other.

Be very careful to whom you trust one of these keys of the side-door. The fact of possessing one renders those even who are dear to you very terrible at times. You can keep the world out from your front-door, or receive visitors only when you are ready for them; but those of your own flesh and blood, or of certain grades of intimacy, can come in at the side-door, if they will, at any hour and in any mood. Some of them have a scale

of your whole nervous system, and can play all the gamut of your sensibilities in semitones,—touching the naked nerve-pulps as a pianist strikes the keys of his instrument. I am satisfied that there are as great masters of this nerve-playing as Vieuxtemps or Thalberg in their lines of performance. Married life is the school in which the most accomplished artists in this department are found. A delicate woman is the best instrument ; she has such a magnificent compass of sensibilities ! From the deep inward moan which follows pressure on the great nerves of right, to the sharp cry as the filaments of taste are struck with a crashing sweep, is a range which no other instrument possesses. A few exercises on it daily at home fit a man wonderfully for his habitual labours, and refresh him immensely as he returns from them. No stranger can get a great many notes of torture out of a human soul ; it takes one that knows it well,—parent, child, brother, sister, intimate. Be very careful to whom you give a side-door key ; too many have them already.—

You remember the old story of the tender-hearted man, who placed a frozen viper in his bosom, and was stung by it when it became thawed ? If we take a cold-blooded creature into our bosom, better that it should sting us and we should die than that its chill should slowly steal into our hearts ; warm it we never can ! I have seen faces of women that were fair to look upon, yet one could see that the icicles were forming round these women's hearts. I knew what freezing image lay on the white breasts beneath the laces !

A very simple *intellectual* mechanism answers the necessities of friendship, and even of the most intimate relations of life. If a watch tell us the hour and minute, we can be content to carry it about with us for a lifetime, though it has no second-hand, and is not a repeater, nor a musical watch,—though it is not enamelled nor jewelled,—in short, though it has little beyond the wheels required for a trustworthy instrument, added to a good face and a pair of useful hands. The more wheels there are in a watch or a brain, the more trouble they are to take care of. The movements of exaltation which belong to genius are egotistic by their very nature. A calm, clear mind, not subject to the spasms and crises which are so often met with in creative or intensely perceptive natures, is the best basis for love or friendship.—Observe, I am talking about *minds*. I won't say, the more intellect, the less capacity for loving ; for that would do wrong to the understanding and reason ;—but, on the other hand, that the brain often runs away with the heart's best blood, which gives the world a few pages of wisdom or sentiment or poetry, instead of making one other heart happy, I have no question.

If one's intimate in love or friendship cannot or does not share all one's intellectual tastes or pursuits, that is a small matter. Intellectual companions can be found easily in men and books. After all, if we think of it, most of the world's loves and

friendships have been between people that could not read nor spell.

But to radiate the heat of the affections into a clod, which absorbs all that is poured into it, but never warms beneath the sunshine of smiles or the pressure of hand or lip, this is the great martyrdom of sensitive beings,—most of all in that perpetual *auto da fe* where young womanhood is the sacrifice.—

You noticed, perhaps, what I just said about the loves and friendships of illiterate persons,—that is, of the human race, with a few exceptions here and there. I like books,—I was born and bred among them, and have the easy feeling, when I get into their presence, that a stable-boy has among horses. I don't think I undervalue them either as companions or as instructors. But I can't help remembering that the world's great men have not commonly been great scholars, nor its great scholars great men. The Hebrew patriarchs had small libraries, I think, if any ; yet they represent to our imaginations a very complete idea of manhood, and, I think, if we could ask in Abraham to dine with us men of letters next Saturday, we should feel honoured by his company.

What I wanted to say about books is this : that there are times in which every active mind feels itself above any and all human books.—

I think a man must have a good opinion of himself, sir,—said the divinity-student,—who should feel himself above Shakespeare at any time.—

My young friend, I replied, the man who is never conscious of a state of feeling or of intellectual effort entirely beyond expression by any form of words whatsoever is a mere creature of language. I can hardly believe there are any such men. Why, think for a moment of the power of music. The nerves that make us alive to it spread out (so the Professor tells me) in the most sensitive region of the marrow, just where it is widening to run upwards into the hemispheres. It has its seat in the region of sense rather than of thought. Yet it produces a continuous and, as it were, logical sequence of emotional and intellectual changes ; but how different from trains of thought proper ! how entirely beyond the reach of symbols !—Think of human passions as compared with all phrases ! Did you ever hear of a man's growing lean by the reading of *Romeo and Juliet*, or blowing his brains out because Desdemona was maligned ? There are a good many symbols, even, that are more expressive than words. I remember a young wife who had to part with her husband for a time. She did not write a mournful poem ; indeed, she was a silent person, and perhaps hardly said a word about it : but she quietly turned of a deep orange colour with jaundice. A great many people in this world have but one form of rhetoric for their profoundest experiences,—namely, to waste away and die. When a man can *read*, his paroxysm of feeling is passing. When he

can *read*, his thought has slackened its hold.—You talk about reading Shakespeare, using him as an expression for the highest intellect, and you wonder that any common person should be so presumptuous as to suppose his thought can rise above the text which lies before him. But think a moment. A child's reading of Shakespeare is one thing, and Coleridge's or Schlegel's reading of him is another. The saturation-point of each mind differs from that of every other. But I think it is as true for the small mind which can only take up a little, as for the great one which takes up much, that the suggested trains of thought and feeling ought always to rise above—not the author, but the reader's mental version of the author, whoever he may be.

I think most readers of Shakespeare sometimes find themselves thrown into exalted mental conditions like those produced by music. Then they may drop the book, to pass at once into the region of thought without words. We may happen to be very dull folks, you and I, and probably are, unless there is some particular reason to suppose the contrary. But we get glimpses now and then of a sphere of spiritual possibilities, where we, dull as we are now, may sail in vast circles round the largest compass of earthly intelligences.—

I confess there are times when I feel like the friend I mentioned to you some time ago—I hate the very sight of a book. Sometimes it becomes almost a physical necessity to talk out what is in the mind, before putting any thing else into it. It is very bad to have thoughts and feelings, which were meant to come out in talk, *strike in*, as they say of some complaints that ought to show outwardly.

I always believed in life rather than in books. I suppose every day of earth with its hundred thousand deaths and something more of births—with its loves and hates, its triumphs and defeats, its pangs and blisses—has more of humanity in it than all the books that were ever written put together. I believe the flowers growing at this moment send up more fragrance to heaven than was ever exhaled from all the essences ever distilled.

Don't I read up various matters to talk about at this table or elsewhere?—No, that is the last thing I would do. I will tell you my rule. Talk about those subjects you have had long in your mind, and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned.—

Physiologists and metaphysicians have had their attention turned a good deal of late to the automatic and involuntary actions of the mind. Put an idea into your intelligence, and leave it there an hour, a day, a year, without ever having occasion to refer to it. When, at last, you return to it, you do not find it as it was when acquired. It has domiciliated itself, so to speak, become at home, entered into relations with your other

thoughts, and integrated itself with the whole fabric of the mind. Or take a simple and familiar example : Dr. Carpenter has adduced it. You forget a name in conversation ; go on talking, without making any effort to recall it, and presently the mind evolves it by its own involuntary and unconscious action, while you were pursuing another train of thought, and the name rises of itself to your lips.

There are some curious observations I should like to make about the mental machinery, but I think we are getting rather didactic.—

I should be gratified if Benjamin Franklin would let me know something about his progress in the French language. I rather liked that exercise he read us the other day, though I must confess I should hardly dare to translate it, for fear some people in a remote city where I once lived might think I was drawing their portraits.

Yes, Paris is a famous place for societies. I don't know whether the piece I mentioned from the French author was intended simply as natural history, or whether there was not a little malice in his description. At any rate, when I gave my translation to B. F. to turn back again into French, one reason was that I thought it would sound a little bald in English, and some people might think it was meant to have some local bearing or other, which the author, of course, didn't mean, inasmuch as he could not be acquainted with any thing on this side of the water.

[The above remarks were addressed to the schoolmistress, to whom I handed the paper after looking it over. The divinity-student came and read over her shoulder, very curious, apparently, but his eyes wandered, I thought. Fancying that her breathing was somewhat hurried and high, or *thoracic*, as my friend the Professor calls it, I watched her a little more closely. It is none of my business. After all, it is the imponderables that move the world—heat, electricity, love.—*Habet ?*]

This is the piece that Benjamin Franklin made into boarding-school French, such as you see here ; don't expect too much ; the mistakes give a relish to it, I think.

#### LES SOCIÉTÉS POLYPHYSIOPHILOSOPHIQUES.

Ces Sociétés là sont une Institution pour suppléer aux besoins d'esprit et de cœur de ces individus qui ont survécu à leurs émotions à l'égard du beau sexe, et qui n'ont pas la distraction de l'habitude de boire.

Pour devenir membre d'une de ces Sociétés, on doit avoir le moins de cheveux possible. S'il y en reste plusieurs qui résistent aux dépilatoires naturelles et autres, on doit avoir quelques connaissances, n'importe dans quel genre. Dès le moment qu'on ouvre la porte de la Société, on a un grand intérêt dans toutes les choses dont on ne sait rien. Ainsi, un microscopiste démontre un nouveau *flexor* du *tarse* d'un *melolontha vulgaris*. Douze savans improvisés, portans des besicles, et qui ne connaissent rien des insectes, si ce n'est les morsures du *culex*, se précipitent sur l'instrument, et voient—une grande bulle d'air, dont il s'émerveillent avec effusion.

Ce qui est un spectacle plein d'instruction—pour ceux qui ne sont pas de ladite Société. Tous les membres regardent les chimistes en particulier avec un air d'intelligence parfaite pendant qu'ils prouvent dans un discours d'une demiheure que  $O^6 N^3 H^5 C^6$ , &c., font quelque chose qui n'est bonne à rien, mais qui probablement a une odeur très désagréable, selon l'habitude des produits chimiques. Après cela vient un mathématicien qui vous bourre avec des  $a + b$  et vous rapporte enfin un  $x + y$ , dont vous n'avez pas besoin et qui ne change nullement vos relations avec la vie. Un naturaliste vous parle des formations spéciales des animaux excessivement inconnus, dont vous n'avez jamais soupçonné l'existence. Ainsi il vous décrit les *follicules de l'appendix vermiformis* d'un *dzigguetai*. Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est qu'un *follicule*. Vous ne savez pas ce que c'est qu'un *appendix vermiformis*. Vous n'avez jamais entendu parler du *dzigguetai*. Ainsi vous gagnez toutes ces connaissances à la fois, qui s'attachent à votre esprit comme l'eau adhère aux plumes d'un canard. On connaît toutes les langues *ex officio* en devenant membre d'une de ces Sociétés. Ainsi quand on entend lire un *Essai sur les dialectes, Tchutchiens*, on comprend tout cela de suite, et s'instruit énormément.

Il y a deux espèces d'individus qu'on trouve toujours à ces Sociétés : 1° Le membre à questions ; 2° Le membre à "Bylaws."

La *question* est une spécialité. Celui que en fait métier ne fait jamais des réponses. La question est une manière très commode de dire les choses suivantes : "Me voilà ! Je ne suis pas fossile, moi—je respire encore ! J'ai des idées—voyez mon intelligence ! Vous ne croyiez pas, vous autres, que je savais quelque chose de cela ! Ah, nous avons un peu de sagacité, voyez vous ! Nous ne sommes nullement la bête qu'on pense !" — *Le faiseur de questions donne peu d'attention aux réponses qu'on fait ; ce n'est pas là dans sa spécialité.*

Le membre à "Bylaws" est le bouchon de toutes les émotions mousseuses et généreuses qui se montrent dans la Société. C'est un empereur manque—un tyran à la troisième trituration. C'est un esprit dur, borné, exact, grand dans les petites choses, petit dans les grandeurs, selon le mot du grand Jefferson. On ne l'aime pas dans la Société, mais on le respecte et on le craint. Il n'y a qu'un mot pour ce membre audessus de "Bylaws." Ce mot est pour lui ce que l'Om est aux Hindous. C'est sa religion ; il n'y a rien audelà. Ce mot là c'est la CONSTITUTION !

Lesdites Sociétés publient des feuilletons de tems en tems. On les trouve abandonnés à sa porte, nus comme des enfans nouveaunés, faute de membrane cutanée, ou même papyracée. Si on aime le botanique, on y trouve une mémoire sur les coquilles ; si on fait des études zoologiques, on trouve un grand tas de  $q' \sqrt{-1}$ , ce qui doit être infiniment plus commode que les encyclopédies. Ainsi il est clair comme la métaphysique qu'on doit devenir membre d'une Société telle que nous décrivons.

*Recette pour le Dépilatoire Physiophilosophique.*

Chaux vive lb. ss. Eau bouillante Oj.

Dépalez avec. Polissez ensuite.

I told the boy that his translation into French was creditable to him ; and some of the company wishing to hear what there was in the piece that made me smile, I turned it into English for them, as well as I could on the spot.

The landlady's daughter seemed to be much amused by the idea that a depilatory could take the place of literary and scientific accomplishments ; she wanted me to print the piece, so that she might send a copy of it to her cousin in Mizzourah ; she didn't think he'd have to do any thing to the outside of his head

to get into any of the societies; he had to wear a wig once, when he played a part in a tabullo.

No, said I, I shouldn't think of printing that in English. I'll tell you why. As soon as you get a few thousand people together in a town there is somebody that every sharp thing you say is sure to hit. What if a thing was written in Paris or in Pekin? That makes no difference. Everybody in those cities, or almost everybody, has his counterpart here, and in all large places. You never studied *averages* as I have had occasion to.

I'll tell you how I came to know so much about averages. There was one season when I was lecturing, commonly five evenings in the week, through most of the lecturing period. I soon found, as most speakers do, that it was pleasanter to work one lecture than to keep several in hand.

Don't you get sick to death of one lecture? said the landlady's daughter, who had a new dress on that day, and was in spirits for conversation.

I was going to talk about averages, I said, but I have no objection to telling you about lectures, to begin with.

A new lecture always has a certain excitement connected with its delivery. One thinks well of it, as of most things fresh from his mind. After a few deliveries of it, one gets tired and then disgusted with its repetition. Go on delivering it, and the disgust passes off, until, after one has repeated it a hundred or a hundred and fifty times, he rather enjoys the hundred and first or hundred and fifty-first time, before a new audience. But this is on one condition—that he never lays the lecture down and lets it cool. If he does, there comes on a loathing for it which is intense, so that the sight of the old battered manuscript is as bad as sea-sickness.

A new lecture is just like any other new tool. We use it for a while with pleasure. Then it blisters our hands, and we hate to touch it. By and by our hands get callous, and then we have no longer any sensitiveness about it. But if we give it up, the calluses disappear; and if we meddle with it again, we miss the novelty and get the blisters.—The story is often quoted of Whitefield, that he said a sermon was good for nothing until it had been preached forty times. A lecture doesn't begin to be old until it has passed its hundredth delivery; and some, I think, have doubled, if not quadrupled, that number. These old lectures are a man's best, commonly; they improve by age, also, like the pipes, fiddles, and poems I told you of the other day. One learns to make the most of their strong points and to carry off their weak ones,—to take out the really good things which don't tell on the audience, and put in cheaper things that do. All this degrades him, of course, but it improves the lecture for general delivery. A thoroughly popular lecture ought to have nothing in it which five hundred people cannot all take in a flash, just as it is uttered.—



No, indeed,—I should be very sorry to say any thing disrespectful of audiences. I have been kindly treated by a great many, and may occasionally face one hereafter. But I tell you the *average* intellect of five hundred persons, taken as they come, is not very high. It may be sound and safe, so far as it goes, but it is not very rapid or profound. A lecture ought to be something which all can understand, about something which interests every body. I think, that, if any experienced lecturer gives you a different account from this, it will probably be one of those eloquent or forcible speakers who hold an audience by the charm of their manner, whatever they talk about,—even when they don't talk very well.

But an *average*, which was what I meant to speak about, is one of the most extraordinary subjects of observation and study. It is awful in its uniformity, in its automatic necessity of action. Two communities of ants or bees are exactly alike in all their actions, so far as we can see. Two lyceum assemblies, of five hundred each, are so nearly alike, that they are absolutely undistinguishable in many cases by any definite mark, and there is nothing but the place and time by which one can tell the "remarkably intelligent audience" of a town in New York or Ohio from one in any New-England town of similar size. Of course, if any principle of selection has come in, as in those special associations of young men which are common in cities, it deranges the uniformity of the assemblage. But let there be no such interfering circumstances, and one knows pretty well even the look the audience will have before he goes. Front seats; a few old folks,—shiny-headed,—slant up best ear towards the speaker,—drop off asleep after a while, when the air begins to get a little narcotic with carbonic acid. Bright women's faces, young and middle-aged, a little behind these, but toward the front—(pick out the best, and lecture mainly to that). Here and there a countenance, sharp and scholarlike, and a dozen pretty female ones sprinkled about. An indefinite number of pairs of young people,—happy, but not always very attentive. Boys, in the background, more or less quiet. Dull faces here, there,—in how many places! I don't say dull *people*, but faces without a ray of sympathy or a movement of expression. They are what kill the lecturer. These negative faces with their vacuous eyes and stony linaments pump and suck the warm soul out of him;—that is the chief reason why lecturers grow so pale before the season is over. They render *latent* any amount of vital caloric; they act on our minds as those cold-blooded creatures I was talking about act on our hearts.

Out of all these inevitable elements the audience is generated,—a great compound vertebrate, as much like fifty others you have seen as any two mammals of the same species are like each other. Each audience laughs, and each cries, in just the same places of your lecture; that is, if you make one laugh or



cry, you make all. Even those little indescribable movements which a lecturer takes cognisance of, just as a driver notices his horse's cocking his ears, are sure to come in exactly the same place of your lecture always. I declare to you, that, as the monk said about the picture in the convent,—that he sometimes thought the living tenants were the shadows, and the painted figures the realities,—I have sometimes felt as if I were a wandering spirit, and this great unchanging multivertebrate which I faced night after night was one ever-listening animal, which writhed along after me wherever I fled, and coiled at my feet every evening, turning up to me the same sleepless eyes which I thought I had closed with my last drowsy incantation!—

Oh, yes! A thousand kindly and courteous acts,—a thousand faces that melted individually out of my recollection as the April snow melts, but only to steal away and find the beds of flowers whose roots are memory, but which blossom in poetry and dreams. I am not ungrateful, nor unconscious of all the good feeling and intelligence every where to be met with through the vast parish to which the lecturer ministers. But when I set forth, leading a string of my mind's daughters to market, as the country-folk fetch in their strings of horses—Pardon me, that was a coarse fellow who sneered at the sympathy wasted on an unhappy lecturer, as if, because he was decently paid for his services, he had therefore sold his sensibilities.—Family men get dreadfully homesick. In the remote and bleak village the heart returns to the red blaze of the logs in one's fireplace at home.

“There are his young barbarians all at play,” if he owns any youthful savages.—No, the world has a million roosts for a man, but only one nest.—

It is a fine thing to be an oracle to which an appeal is always made in all discussions. The men of facts wait their turn in grim silence, with that slight tension about the nostrils which the consciousness of carrying a “settler” in the form of a fact or a revolver gives the individual thus armed. When a person is really full of information, and does not abuse it to crush conversation, his part is to that of the real talkers what the instrumental accompaniment is in a trio or quartette of vocalists.—

What do I mean by the real talkers?—Why, the people with fresh ideas, of course, and plenty of good warm words to dress them in. Facts always yield the place of honour, in conversation, to thoughts about facts; but if a false note is uttered, down comes the finger on the key, and the man of facts asserts his true dignity. I have known three of these men of facts, at least, who were always formidable,—and one of them was tyrannical.—

Yes, a man sometimes makes a grand appearance on a particular occasion; but these men knew something about almost every thing, and never made mistakes.—He? *Veneers* in first-

rate style. The mahogany scales off now and then in spots, and then you see the cheap light stuff.—I found — very fine in conversational information the other day, when we were in company. The talk ran upon mountains. He was wonderfully well acquainted with the leading facts about the Andes, the Apennines, and the Appalachians; he had nothing in particular to say about Ararat, Ben Nevis, and various other mountains that were mentioned. By and by some Revolutionary anecdote came up, and he showed singular familiarity with the lives of the Adamses, and gave many details relating to Major André. A point of Natural History being suggested, he gave an excellent account of the air-bladder of fishes. He was very full upon the subject of agriculture, but retired from the conversation when horticulture was introduced in the discussion. So he seemed well acquainted with the geology of anthracite, but did not pretend to know any thing of other kinds of coal. There was something so odd about the extent and limitations of his knowledge, that I suspected all at once what might be the meaning of it, and waited till I got an opportunity.—Have you seen the *New American Cyclopædia*? said I.—I have, he replied; I received an early copy.—How far does it go?—He turned red, and answered,—To Araguay.—Oh, said I to myself,—not quite so far as Ararat;—that is the reason he knew nothing about it; but he must have read all the rest straight through, and, if he can remember what is in this volume until he has read all those that are to come, he will know more than I ever thought he would.

Since I had this experience, I hear that somebody else has related a similar story. I didn't borrow it, for all that.—I made a comparison at table some time since, which has often been quoted, and received many compliments. It was that of the mind of a bigot to the pupil of the eye; the more light you pour on it the more it contracts. The simile is a very obvious, and, I suppose I may now say, a happy one; for it has just been shown me that it occurs in a Preface to certain Political Poems of Thomas Moore's, published long before my remark was repeated. When a person of fair character for literary honesty uses an image such as another has employed before him, the presumption is, that he has struck upon it independently, or unconsciously recalled it, supposing it his own.

It is impossible to tell, in a great many cases, whether a comparison which suddenly suggests itself is a new conception or a recollection. I told you the other day that I never wrote a line of verse that seemed to me comparatively good but it appeared old at once, and often as if it had been borrowed. But I confess I never suspected the above comparison of being old, except from the fact of its obviousness. It is proper, however, that I proceed by a formal instrument to relinquish all claim to any property in an idea given to the world at about the time when I

had just joined the class in which Master Thomas Moore was then a somewhat advanced scholar.

I, therefore, in full possession of my native honesty, but knowing the liability of all men to be elected to public office, and for that reason feeling uncertain how soon I may be in danger of losing it, do hereby renounce all claim to being considered the *first* person who gave utterance to a certain simile or comparison referred to in the accompanying documents, and relating to the pupil of the eye on the one part, and the mind of the bigot on the other. I hereby relinquish all glory and profit, and especially all claims to letters from autograph collectors founded upon my supposed property in the above comparison, knowing well that, according to the laws of literature, they who speak first hold the fee of the thing said. I do also agree that all Editors of Cyclopædias and Biographical Dictionaries, all Publishers of Reviews and Papers, and all Critics writing therein, shall be at liberty to retract or qualify any opinion predicated on the supposition that I was the sole and undisputed author of the above comparison. But, inasmuch as I do affirm that the comparison aforesaid was uttered by me in the firm belief that it was new and wholly my own, and as I have good reason to think that I had never seen or heard it when first expressed by me, and as it is well known that different persons may independently utter the same idea, as is evinced by that familiar line from Donatus,

“Pereant illi qui ante nos nostra dixerunt,”—

now, therefore, I do request by this instrument that all well-disposed persons will abstain from asserting or implying that I am open to any accusation whatsoever touching the said comparison, and, if they have so asserted or implied, that they will have the manliness forthwith to retract the same assertion or insinuation.

I think few persons have a greater disgust for plagiarism than myself. If I had even suspected that the idea in question was borrowed, I should have disclaimed originality, or mentioned the coincidence, as I once did in a case where I had happened to hit on an idea of Swift's. But what shall I do about these verses I was going to read you? I am afraid that half mankind would accuse me of stealing their thoughts if I printed them. I am convinced that several of you, especially if you are getting a little on in life, will recognise some of these sentiments as having passed through your consciousness at some time. I can't help it—it is too late now. The verses are written, and you must have them. Listen, then, and you shall hear

#### WHAT WE ALL THINK.

That age was older once than now,  
In spite of locks untimely shed,  
Or silvered on the youthful brow ;  
That babes make love and children wed,

That sunshine had a heavenly glow,  
Which faded with those "good old days,"  
When winters came with deeper snow,  
And autumns with a softer haze.

That—mother, sister, wife, or child—  
The "best of women" each has known.  
Were schoolboys ever half so wild?  
How young the grandpapas have grown!

That *but for this* our souls were free,  
And *but for that* our lives were blest;  
That in some season yet to be  
Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene'er we groan with ache or pain,  
Some common ailment of the race—  
Though doctors think the matter plain—  
That ours is "a peculiar case."

That when, like babes with fingers burned,  
We count one bitter maxim more,  
Our lesson all the world has learned,  
And men are wiser than before.

That when we sob o'er fancied woes,  
The angels hovering overhead  
Count every pitying drop that flows,  
And love us for the tears we shed.

That when we stand with tearless eye  
And turn the beggar from our door,  
They still approve us when we sigh,  
"Ah, had I but *one thousand more*!"

That weakness smoothed the path of sin,  
In half the slips our youth has known;  
And whatsoe'er its blame has been,  
That Mercy flowers on faults outgrown.

Though temples crowd the crumbled brink  
O'erhanging truth's eternal flow,  
Their tablets bold with *what we think*,  
Their echoes dumb to *what we know*;

That one unquestioned text we read,  
All doubt beyond, all fear above—  
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed  
Can burn or blot it: GOD IS LOVE!

## VII.

[THIS particular record is noteworthy principally for containing a paper by my friend the Professor, with a poem or two annexed or intercalated. I would suggest to young persons that they should pass over it for the present, and read instead of it that story about the young man who was in love with the young lady, and in great trouble for something like nine pages, but happily married on the tenth page or thereabouts, which, I take it for granted, will be contained in the periodical where this is found, unless it differ from all other publications of the kind. Perhaps,

if such young people will lay the number aside, and take it up ten years, or a little more, from the present time, they may find something in it for their advantage. They can't possibly understand it all now.]

My friend the Professor began talking with me one day in a dreary sort of way. I couldn't get at the difficulty for a good while, but at last it turned out that somebody had been calling him an old man.—He didn't mind his students calling him *the* old man, he said. That was a technical expression, and he thought that he remembered hearing it applied to himself when he was about twenty-five. It may be considered as a familiar and sometimes endearing appellation. An Irishwoman calls her husband "the old man," and he returns the caressing expression by speaking of her as "the old woman." But now, said he, just suppose a case like one of these. A young stranger is overheard talking of you as a very nice old gentleman. A friendly and genial critic speaks of your green old age as illustrating the truth of some axiom you had uttered with reference to that period of life. What I call an old man is a person with a smooth, shining crown and a fringe of scattered white hairs, seen in the streets on sunshiny days, stooping as he walks, bearing a cane, moving cautiously and slowly; telling old stories, smiling at present follies, living in a narrow world of dry habits; one that remains waking when others have dropped asleep, and keeps a little night-lamp-flame of life burning year after year, if the lamp is not upset, and there is only a careful hand held round it to prevent the puffs of wind from blowing the flame out. That's what I call an old man.

Now, said the Professor, you don't mean to tell me that I have got to that yet? Why, bless you, I am several years short of the time when—[I knew what was coming, and could hardly keep from laughing; twenty years ago he used to quote it as one of those absurd speeches men of genius will make, and now he is going to argue from it]—several years short of the time when Balzac says that men are—most—you know—dangerous to—the hearts of—in short, most to be dreaded by duennas that have charge of susceptible females.—What age is that? said I statistically.—Fifty-two years, answered the Professor.—Balzac ought to know, said I, if it is true that Goethe said of him, that each of his stories must have been dug out of a woman's heart. But fifty-two is a high figure.

Stand in the light of the window, Professor, said I.—The Professor took up the desired position.—You have white hairs, I said.—Had 'em any time these twenty years, said the Professor.—And the crow's-foot—*pes anserinus*, rather.—The Professor smiled, as I wanted him to, and the folds radiated like the ridges of a half-opened fan, from the outer corner of the eyes to the temples.—And the calipers, said I.—What are the *calipers*? he asked curiously.—Why, the parenthesis, said I.—*Parenthesis*? said the

Professor ; what's that?—Why, look in the glass when you are disposed to laugh, and see if your mouth isn't framed in a couple of crescent lines—so, my boy ( ).—It's all nonsense, said the Professor ; just look at my *biceps* ; and he began pulling off his coat to show me his arm.—Be careful, said I ; you can't bear exposure to the air at your time of life, as you could once.—I will box with you, said the Professor, row with you, walk with you, ride with you, swim with you, or sit at table with you, for fifty dollars a side.—Pluck survives stamina, I answered.

The Professor went off a little out of humour. A few weeks afterwards he came in, looking very good-natured, and brought me a paper, which I have here, and from which I shall read you some portions, if you don't object. He had been thinking the matter over, he said—had read Cicero "De Senectute," and made up his mind to meet old age half-way. These were some of his reflections that he had written down ; so here you have

### THE PROFESSOR'S PAPER.

THERE is no doubt when old age begins. The human body is a furnace which keeps in blast threescore years and ten, more or less. It burns about three hundred pounds of carbon a year (besides other fuel), when in fair working order, according to a great chemist's estimate. When the fire slackens, life declines ; when it goes out, we are dead.

It has been shown by some noted French experimenters, that the amount of combustion increases up to about the thirtieth year, remains stationary to about forty-five, and then diminishes. This last is the point where old age starts from. The great fact of physical life is the perpetual commerce with the elements, and the fire is the measure of it.

About this time of life, if food is plenty where you live—for that, you know, regulates matrimony—you may be expecting to find yourself a grandfather some fine morning ; a kind of domestic felicity that gives one a cool shiver of delight to think of, as among the not remotely possible events.

I don't mind much those slipshod lines Dr. Johnson wrote to Thrale, telling her about life's declining from *thirty-five* ; the furnace is in full blast for ten years longer, as I have said. The Romans came very near the mark ; their age of enlistment reached from seventeen to forty-six years.

What is the use of fighting against the seasons, or the tides, or the movements of the planetary bodies, or this ebb in the wave of life that flows through us ? We are old fellows from the moment the fire begins to go out. Let us always behave like gentlemen when we are introduced to new acquaintance.

### *Incipit Allegoria Senectutis.*

Old Age, this is Mr. Professor ; Mr. Professor, this is Old Age.

*Old Age.*—Mr. Professor, I hope to see you well. I have known you for some time, though I think you did not know me. Shall we walk down the street together?

*Professor* (drawing back a little).—We can talk more quietly perhaps in my study. Will you tell me how it is you seem to be acquainted with everybody you are introduced to, though he evidently considers you an entire stranger?

*Old Age.*—I make it a rule never to force myself upon a person's recognition until I have known him at least *five years*.

*Professor.*—Do you mean to say that you have known me so long as that?

*Old Age.*—I do. I left my card on you longer ago than that, but I am afraid you never read it; yet I see you have it with you.

*Professor.*—Where?

*Old Age.*—There, between your eyebrows—three straight lines running up and down; all the probate courts know that token—"Old Age, his mark." Put your forefinger on the inner end of one eyebrow, and your middle finger on the inner end of the other eyebrow; now separate the fingers, and you will smoothe out my sign-manual; that's the way you used to look before I left my card on you.

*Professor.*—What message do people generally send back when you first call on them?

*Old Age.*—*Not at home*. Then I leave a card and go. Next year I call; get the same answer; leave another card. So for five or six, sometimes ten years or more. At last, if they don't let me in, I break in through the front-door or the windows.

We talked together in this way some time. Then Old Age said again: Come, let us walk down the street together—and offered me a cane, an eye-glass, a tippet, and a pair of over-shoes. No, much obliged to you, said I. I don't want those things, and I had a little rather talk with you here, privately, in my study. So I dressed myself up in a jaunty way and walked out alone: got a fall, caught a cold, was laid up with a lumbago, and had time to think over this whole matter.

### *Explicit Allegoria Senectutis.*

We have settled when old age begins. Like all Nature's processes, it is gentle and gradual in its approaches, strewed with allusions, and all its little griefs soothed by natural sedatives. But the iron hand is not less irresistible because it wears the velvet glove. The buttonwood throws off its bark in large flakes, which one may find lying at its foot, pushed out, and at last pushed off, by that tranquil movement from beneath, which is too slow to be seen, but too powerful to be arrested. One finds them always, but one rarely sees them fall. So it is our youth drops from us—scales off, sapless and lifeless, and lays bare the tender and immature fresh growth of old age. Looked at collectively,



the changes of old age appear as a series of personal insults and indignities, terminating at last in death, which Sir Thomas Brown has called "the very disgrace and ignominy of our natures."

My lady's cheek can boast no more  
The cranberry white and pink it wore ;  
And where her shining locks divide,  
The parting line is all too wide—

No, no—this will never do. Talk about men, if you will, but spare the poor women.

We have a brief description of seven stages of life by a remarkably good observer. It is very presumptuous to attempt to add to it, yet I have been struck with the fact that life admits of a natural analysis into no less than fifteen distinct periods. Taking the five primary divisions, infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, old age, each of these has its own three periods of immaturity, complete development, and decline. I recognise an *old* baby at once,—with its "pipe and mug" (a stick of candy and a porringer),—so does every body; and an old child shedding its milk-teeth is only a little prototype of the old man shedding his permanent ones. Fifty or thereabouts is only the childhood, as it were, of old age; the graybeard youngster must be weaned from his late suppers now. So you will see that you have to make fifteen stages at any rate, and that it would not be hard to make twenty-five; five primary, each with five secondary divisions.

The infancy and childhood of commencing old age have the same ingenuous simplicity and delightful unconsciousness about them as the first stage of the earlier periods of life shows. The great delusion of mankind is in supposing that to be individual and exceptional which is universal and according to law. A person is always startled when he hears himself seriously called an old man for the first time.

Nature gets us out of youth into manhood, as sailors are hurried on board of vessels,—in a state of intoxication. We are hustled into maturity reeling with our passions and imaginations, and we have drifted far away from port before we awake out of our illusions. But to carry us out of maturity into old age, without our knowing where we are going, she drugs us with strong opiates, and so we stagger along with wide-open eyes that see nothing until snow enough has fallen on our heads to rouse our comatose brains out of their stupid trances.

There is one mark of age that strikes me more than any of the physical ones;—I mean the formation of *Habits*. An old man who shrinks into himself falls into ways that become as positive and as much beyond the reach of outside influences as if they were governed by clock-work. The *animal* functions, as the physiologists call them, in distinction from the *organic*, tend, in the process of deterioration to which age and neglect united gradually lead them, to assume the periodical or rhythmical



type of movement. Every man's *heart*—this organ belongs, you know, to the organic system—has a regular mode of action; but I know a great many men whose *brains*, and all their voluntary existence flowing from their brains, have a *systole* and *diastole* as regular as that of the heart itself. Habit is the approximation of the animal system to the organic. It is a confession of failure in the highest function of being, which involves a perpetual self-determination, in full view of all existing circumstances. But habit, you see, is an action in present circumstances from past motives. It is substituting a *vis a tergo* for the evolution of living force.

When a man, instead of burning up three hundred pounds of carbon a year, has got down to two hundred and fifty, it is plain enough he must economise force somewhere. Now, habit is a labour-saving invention which enables a man to get along with less fuel,—that is all; for fuel is force, you know, just as much in the page I am writing for you as in the locomotive or the legs that carry it to you. Carbon is the same thing, whether you call it wood, or coal, or bread-and-cheese. A reverend gentleman demurred to this statement,—as if, because combustion is asserted to be the *sine quâ non* of thought, therefore thought is alleged to be a purely chemical process. Facts of chemistry are one thing, I told him, and facts of consciousness another. It can be proved to him, by a very simple analysis of some of his spare elements, that every Sunday, when he does his duty faithfully, he uses up more phosphorus out of his brain and nerves than on ordinary days. But then he had his choice whether to do his duty, or to neglect it, and save his phosphorus and other combustibles.

It follows from all this that *the formation of habits* ought naturally to be, as it is, the special characteristic of age. As for the muscular powers, they pass their maximum long before the time when the true decline of life begins, if we may judge by the experience of the ring. A man is “stale,” I think, in their language, soon after thirty,—often, no doubt, much earlier, as gentlemen of the pugilistic profession are exceedingly apt to keep their vital fire burning *with the blower up*.—

So far without Tully. But in the mean time I have been reading the treatise “De Senectute.” It is not long, but a leisurely performance. The old gentleman was sixty-three years of age when he addressed it to his friend T. Pomponius Atticus, Eq., a person of distinction, some two or three years older. We read it when we are schoolboys, forget all about it for thirty years, and then take it up again by a natural instinct,—provided always that we read Latin as we drink water, without stopping to taste it, as all of us who ever learned it at school or college ought to do.

Cato is the chief speaker in the dialogue. A good deal of it is what would be called in vulgar phrase “slow.” It unpacks and unfolds incidental illustrations which a modern writer

would look at the back of, and toss each to its pigeon-hole. I think ancient classics and ancient people are alike in the tendency to this kind of expansion.

An old doctor came to me once (this is literal fact) with some contrivance or other for people with broken kneepans. As the patient would be confined for a good while, he might find it dull work to sit with his hands in his lap. Reading, the ingenious inventor suggested, would be an agreeable mode of passing the time. He mentioned, in his written account of his contrivance, various works that might amuse the weary hour. I remember only three,—*Don Quixote*, *Tom Jones*, and *Watts on the Mind*.

It is not generally understood that Cicero's essay was delivered as a lyceum lecture (*concio popularis*), at the Temple of Mercury. The journals (*papyri*) of the day ("Tempora Quotidiana,"—"Tribunus Quirinalis,"—"Præco Romanus," and the rest) gave abstracts of it, one of which I have translated and modernised, as being a substitute for the analysis I intended to make.

IV. Kal. Mart. . . . .

The lecture at the Temple of Mercury, last evening, was well attended by the *élite* of our great city. Two hundred thousand sestertia were thought to have been represented in the house. The doors were besieged by a mob of shabby fellows (*illotum vulgus*), who were at length quieted after two or three had been somewhat roughly handled (*gladio jugulati*). The speaker was the well-known Mark Tully, Eq.,—the subject, Old Age. Mr. T. has a lean and scraggy person, with a very unpleasant excrescence upon his nasal feature, from which his nickname of *chick-pea* (Cicero) is said by some to be derived. As a lecturer is public property, we may remark, that his outer garment (*toga*) was of cheap stuff and somewhat worn, and that his general style and appearance of dress and manner (*habitus, vestitusque*) were somewhat provincial.

The lecture consisted of an imaginary dialogue between Cato and Lælius. We found the first portion rather heavy, and retired a few moments for refreshment (*pocula quædam vini*).—All want to reach old age, says Cato, and grumble when they get it; therefore they are donkeys.—The lecturer will allow us to say that he is the donkey; we know we shall grumble at old age, but we want to live through youth and manhood, *in spite* of the troubles we shall groan over.—There was considerable prosing as to what old age can do and can't.—True, but not new. Certainly, old folks can't jump,—break the necks of their thigh-bones (*femorum cervices*) if they do; can't crack nuts with their teeth; can't climb a greased pole (*malum inunctum scandere non possunt*); but they can tell old stories and give you good advice; if they know what you have made up your mind to do when you ask them.—All this is well enough, but won't set the Tiber on fire (*Tiberim accendere nequaquam potest*).

There were some clever things enough (*dicta haud inepta*) a

few of which are worth reporting.—Old people are accused of being forgetful ; but they never forget where they have put their money.—Nobody is so old he doesn't think he can live a year.—The lecturer quoted an ancient maxim,—Grow old early, if you would be old long,—but disputed it.—Authority, he thought, was the chief privilege of age.—It is not great to have money, but fine to govern those that have it.—Old age begins at *forty-six* years, according to the common opinion.—~~It is not every kind of old~~ age or of wine that grows sour with time.—Some excellent remarks were made on immortality, but mainly borrowed from and credited to Plato.—Several pleasing anecdotes were told.—Old Milo, champion of the heavy weights in his day, looked at his arms and whimpered, “They are dead.” Not so dead as you, you old fool,—says Cato ;—you never were good for any thing but for your shoulders and flanks. Pisistratus asked Solon what made him dare to be so obstinate. Old age, said Solon.

The lecture was on the whole acceptable, and a credit to our culture and civilization. The reporter goes on to state that there will be no lecture next week, on account of the expected combat between the bear and the barbarian. Betting (*sponsio*) two to one (*duo ad unum*) on the bear.

After all, the most encouraging things I find in the treatise “De Senectute” are the stories of men who have found new occupations when growing old, or kept up their common pursuits in the extreme period of life. Cato learned Greek when he was old, and speaks of wishing to learn the fiddle, or some such instrument (*fidibus*), after the example of Socrates. Solon learned something new every day, in his old age, as he gloried to proclaim. Cyrus pointed out with pride and pleasure the trees he had planted with his own hand. [I remember a pillar on the Duke of Northumberland's estate at Alnwick, with an inscription in similar words, if not the same. That, like other country places, never wears out. None is too rich, none too poor, none too young, none too old, to enjoy it.] There is a New-England story I have heard more to the point, however, than any of Cicero's. A young farmer was urged to set out some apple-trees.—No, said he ; they are too long growing, and I don't want to plant for other people. The young farmer's father was spoken to about it ; but he, with better reason, alleged that apple-trees were slow and life was fleeting. At last some one mentioned it to the old grandfather of the young farmer. He had nothing else to do ; so he stuck in some trees. He lived long enough to drink barrels of cider made from the apples that grew on those trees.

As for myself, after visiting a friend lately—[Do remember all the time that this is the Professor's paper]—I satisfied myself that I had better concede the fact that—my contemporaries are not so young as they have been,—and that—awkward as it is—

science and history agree in telling me that I can claim the immunities, and must own the humiliations, of the early stage of senility. Ah ! but we have all gone down the hill together. The dandies of my time have split their waistbands and taken to high-low shoes. The beauties of my recollections—where are they ? They have run the gauntlet of years as well as I. First the years pelted them with red roses till their cheeks were all on fire. By and by they began throwing white roses, and that morning flush passed away. At last one of the years threw a snow-ball, and after that no year let the poor girls pass without throwing snow-balls. And then came rougher missiles,—ice and stones ; and from time to time an arrow whistled, and down went one of the poor girls. So there are but few left ; and we don't call those few *girls*, but—

Ah, me ! here am I groaning just as the old Greek sighed *Aï, Aï !* and the old Roman *Eheu !* I have no doubt we should die of shame and grief at the indignities offered us by age, if it were not that we see so many others as badly or worse off than ourselves. We always compare ourselves with our contemporaries.

[I was interrupted in my reading just here. Before I began at the next breakfast, I read them these verses ;—I hope you will like them, and get a useful lesson from them.]

#### THE LAST BLOSSOM.

Though young no more, we still would dream  
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles ;  
The leagues of life to graybeards seem  
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice ?  
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,  
And many a holy father's "niece"  
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain  
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,  
We think upon those ladies twain  
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the patriarch's wintry face,  
The maid of Egypt's dusty glow,  
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,  
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her lord's Olympian smile  
His lotus-loving Memphian lies,—  
The musky daughter of the Nile,  
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress  
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,  
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress  
The long, cold kiss that waits us all !

My bosom heaves, remembering yet  
 The morning of that blissful day  
 When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,  
 And gave my raptured soul away.  
 Flung from her eyes of purest blue,  
 A lasso, with its leaping chain,  
 Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew  
 O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.  
 Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,  
 Sweet vision, waited for so long !  
 Dove that would seek the poet's cage,  
 Lured by the magic breath of song !  
 She blushes ! Ha, reluctant maid,  
 Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told !  
 O'er girlhood's yielding barricade  
 Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold !  
 Come to my arms !—love heeds not years ;  
 No frost the bud of passion knows.—  
 Ha ! what is this my frenzy hears ?  
 A voice behind me uttered,—Rose.  
 Sweet was her smile,—but not for me ;  
 Alas, when woman looks *too* kind,  
 Just turn your foolish head and see,—  
 Some youth is walking close behind !

As to *giving up*, because the Almanac or the Family-Bible says that it is about time to do it, I have no intention of doing any such thing. I grant you that I burn less carbon than some years ago. I see people of my standing really good for nothing,—decrepit, effete, *la lèvre inférieure déjà pendante*, with what little life they have left mainly concentrated in their epigastrium. But as the disease of old age is epidemic, endemic, and sporadic, and every body that lives long enough is sure to catch it, I am going to say, for the encouragement of such as need it, how I treat the malady in my own case.

First. As I feel that, when I have anything to do, there is less time for it than when I was younger, I find that I give my attention more thoroughly, and use my time more economically, than ever before ; so that I can learn any thing twice as easily as in my earlier days. I am not, therefore, afraid to attack a new study. I took up a difficult language a very few years ago with good success, and think of mathematics and metaphysics by and by.

Secondly. I have opened my eyes to a good many neglected privileges and pleasures within my reach, and requiring only a little courage to enjoy them. You may well suppose it pleased me to find that old Cato was thinking of learning to play the fiddle, when I had deliberately taken it up in my old age, and satisfied myself that I could get much comfort, if not much music, out of it.

Thirdly. I have found that some of those active exercises

which are commonly thought to belong to young folks only, may be enjoyed at a much later period.

A young friend has lately written an admirable article in one of the journals, entitled "Saints and their Bodies." Approving of his general doctrines, and grateful for his records of personal experience, I cannot refuse to add my own experimental confirmation of his eulogy on one particular form of active exercise and amusement, namely, *boating*. For the past nine years, I have rowed about, during a good part of the summer, on fresh or salt water. My present fleet on the River Charles consists of three row-boats. 1. A small flat-bottomed skiff, of the shape of a flat-iron, kept mainly to lend to boys. 2. A fancy "dory" for two pairs of sculls, in which I sometimes go out with my young folks. 3. My own particular water-sulky, a "skeleton" or "shell" race-boat, twenty-two feet long, with huge outriggers, which boat I pull with ten-foot sculls—alone, of course, as it holds but one, and tips him out, if he doesn't mind what he is about. In this I glide around the Back Bay, down the stream, up the Charles to Cambridge and Watertown, up the Mystic, round the wharves, in the wake of steamboats, which leave a swell after them delightful to rock upon; I linger under the bridges—those "caterpillar bridges," as my brother professor so happily called them; rub against the black sides of old wood-schooners; cool down under the overhanging stern of some tall Indiamen; stretch across to the Navy-yard, where the sentinel warns me off from the Ohio—just as if I should hurt her by lying in her shadow; then strike out into the harbour, where the water gets clear and the air smells of the ocean—till all at once I remember that if a west wind blows up of a sudden I shall drift along past the islands, out of sight of the dear old State-house—plate, tumbler, knife and fork, all waiting at home, but no chair drawn up at the table—all the dear people waiting, waiting, waiting, while the boat is sliding, sliding, sliding into the great desert, where there is no tree and no fountain. As I don't want my wreck to be washed up on one of the beaches in company with devil's-aprons, bladder-weeds, dead horse-shoes, and bleached crab-shells, I turn about and flap my long narrow wings for home. When the tide is running out swiftly I have a splendid fight to get through the bridges, but always make it a rule to beat, though I have been jammed up into pretty tight places at times, and was caught once between a vessel swinging round and the pier, until our bones (the boat's, that is) cracked as if we had been in the jaws of Behemoth. Then back to my moorings at the foot of the Common, off with the rowing-dress, dash under the green translucent wave, return to the garb of civilisation, walk through my garden, take a look at my elms on the common, and, reaching my habitat, in consideration of my advanced period of life, indulge in the Elysian abandonment of a huge recumbent chair.

When I have established a pair of well-pronounced feathering calluses on my thumbs, when I am in training so that I can do my fifteen miles at a stretch without coming to grief in any way, when I can perform my mile in eight minutes or a little less, then I feel as if I had old Time's head in Chancery, and could give it to him at my leisure.

I do not deny the attraction of walking. I have bored this ancient city through and through in my daily travels, until I know it as an old inhabitant of a Cheshire knows his cheese. Why, it was I who, in the course of these rambles, discovered that remarkable avenue called *Myrtle Street*, stretching in one long line from east of the Reservoir to a precipitous and rudely-paved cliff which looks down on the grim abode of Science, and beyond it to the far hills; a promenade so delicious in its repose, so cheerfully varied with glimpses down the northern slope into busy Cambridge Street, with its iron river of the horse-railroad, and wheeled barges gliding back and forward over it, so delightfully closing at its western extremity in sunny courts and passages where I know peace, and beauty, and virtue, and serene old age must be perpetual tenants,—so alluring to all who desire to take their daily stroll, in the words of Dr. Watts,

“Alike unknowing and unknown,”

that nothing but a sense of duty would have prompted me to reveal the secret of its existence. I concede, therefore, that walking is an immeasurably fine invention, of which old age ought constantly to avail itself.

Saddle-leather is in some respects even preferable to sole-leather. The principle objection to it is of a financial character. But you may be sure that Bacon and Sydenham did not recommend it for nothing. One's *hepar*, or, in vulgar language, liver—a ponderous organ, weighing some three or four pounds—goes up and down like the dasher of a churn in the midst of the other vital arrangements, at every step of a trotting horse. The brains also are shaken up like coppers in a money-box. Riding is good for those that are born with a silver-mounted bridle in their hand, and can ride as much and as often as they like, without thinking all the time they hear that steady grinding sound as the horse's jaws triturate with calm lateral movement the bank-bills and promises to pay upon which it is notorious that the profligate animal in question feeds day and night.

Instead, however, of considering these kinds of exercise in this empirical way, I will devote a brief space to an examination of them in a more scientific form.

The pleasure of exercise is due first to a purely physical impression, and secondly to a sense of power in action. The first source of pleasure varies of course with our condition and the state of the surrounding circumstances; the second with the amount and kind of power, and the extent and kind of action.



In all forms of active exercise there are three powers simultaneously in action—the will, the muscles, and the intellect. Each of these predominates in different kinds of exercises. In walking, the will and muscles are so accustomed to work together and perform their task with so little expenditure of force, that the intellect is left comparatively free. The mental pleasure in walking, as such, is in the sense of power over all our moving machinery. But in riding I have the additional pleasure of governing another will, and my muscles extend to the tips of the animal's ears and to his four hoofs, instead of stopping at my hands and feet. Now in this extension of my volition and my physical frame into another animal, my tyrannical instincts and my desire for heroic strength are at once gratified. When the horse ceases to have a will of his own and his muscles require no special attention on your part, then you may live on horseback, as Wesley did, and write sermons or take naps as you like. But, you will observe that, in riding on horseback, you always have a feeling that, after all, it is not you that do the work, but the animal, and this prevents the satisfaction from being complete.

Now let us look at the conditions of rowing. I won't suppose you to be disgracing yourself in one of those miserable tubs, tugging in which is to rowing the true boat what riding a cow is to bestriding an Arab. You know the Esquimaux *kayak* (if that is the name of it), don't you? Look at that model of one over my door. Sharp, rather?—On the contrary, it is a lubber to the one you and I must have; a Dutch fish-wife to Psyche, contrasted to what I will tell you about. Our boat, then, is something of the shape of a pickerel, as you look down upon his back, he lying in the sunshine, just where the sharp edge of the water cuts in among the lily-pads. It is a kind of a giant *pod*, as one may say—tight every where, except in a little place in the middle, where you sit. Its length is from seven to ten yards, and as it is only from sixteen to thirty inches wide in its widest part, you understand why you want those "outriggers," or projecting iron frames with the rowlocks in which the oars play. My rowlocks are five feet apart; double the greatest width of the boat.

Here you are, then, afloat with a body a rod and a half long, with arms, or wings, as you may choose to call them, stretching more than twenty feet from tip to tip; every volition of yours extending as perfectly into them as if your spinal cord ran down the centre strip of your boat, and the nerves of your arms tingled as far as the broad blades of your oars—oars of spruce, balanced, leathered, and ringed under your own special direction. This, in sober earnest, is the nearest approach to flying that man has ever made, or perhaps ever will make. As the hawk sails without flapping his pinions, so you drift with the tide when you will, in the most luxurious form of locomotion indulged to an embodied



spirit. But if your blood wants rousing, turn round that stake in the river, which you see a mile from here ; and when you come in in sixteen minutes (if you do, for we are old boys, and not champion scullers, you remember), then say if you begin to feel a little warmed up or not ! You can row easily and gently all day, and you can row yourself blind and black in the face in ten minutes, just as you like. It has been long agreed that there is no way in which a man can accomplish so much labour with his muscles as in rowing. It is in the boat, then, that man finds the largest extension of his volitional and muscular existence ; and yet he may tax both of them so slightly, in that most delicious of exercises, that he shall mentally write his sermon, or his poem, or recall the remarks he has made in company and put them in form for the public, as well as in his easy chair.

I dare not publicly name the rare joys, the infinite delights, that intoxicate me on some sweet June morning, when the river and bay are smooth as a sheet of beryl-green silk, and I run along ripping it up with my knife-edged shell of a boat, the rent closing after me like those wounds of angels which Milton tells of, but the seam still shining for many a long rood behind me. To lie still over the Flats, where the waters are shallow, and see the crabs crawling and the sculpins gliding busily and silently beneath the boat—to rustle in through the long, harsh grass that leads up some tranquil creek—to take shelter from the sunbeams under one of the thousand-footed bridges, and look down its interminable colonnades, crusted with green and oozy growths, studded with minute barnacles, and belted with rings of dark muscles, while overhead streams and thunders that other river whose every wave is a human soul flowing to eternity as the river below flows to the ocean—lying there moored unseen, in loneliness so profound that the columns of Tadmor in the Desert could not seem more remote from life—the cool breeze on one's forehead, the stream whispering against the half-sunken pillars—why should I tell of these things, that I should live to see my beloved haunts invaded and the waves blackened with boats as with a swarm of water-beetles ? What a city of idiots we must be not to have covered this glorious bay with gondolas and wherries, as we have just learned to cover the ice in winter with skaters !

I am satisfied that such a set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-musclcd, paste-complexioned youth as we can boast in our Atlantic cities never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage. Of the females that are the mates of these males I do not here speak. I preached my sermon from the lay-pulpit on this matter a good while ago. Of course, if you heard it, you know my belief is that the total climatic influences here are getting up a number of new patterns of humanity, some of which are not an improvement on the old model. Clipper-built, sharp *in the bows*, long in the spars, slender to look at, and fast to go,

the ship, which is the great organ of our national life of relation, is but a reproduction of the typical form which the elements impress upon its builder. All this we cannot help ; but we can make the best of these influences, such as they are. We have a few good boatmen—no good horsemen that I hear of—I cannot speak for cricketing—but as for any great athletic feat performed by a gentleman in these latitudes, society would drop a man who should run round the Common in five minutes. Some of our amateur fencers, singlestick players, and boxers we have no reason to be ashamed of. Boxing is rough play, but not too rough for a hearty young fellow. Any thing is better than this white-blooded degeneration to which we all tend.

I dropped into a gentleman's sparring exhibition only last evening. It did my heart good to see that there were a few young and youngish youths left who could take care of their own heads, in case of emergency. It is a fine sight, that of a gentleman resolving himself into the primitive constituents of his humanity. Here is a delicate young man now, with an intellectual countenance, a slight figure, a sub-pallid complexion, a most unassuming deportment, a mild adolescent, in fact, that any Hiram or Jonathan from between the plough-tails would of course expect to handle with perfect ease. Oh, he is taking off his gold-bowed spectacles ! Ah, he is divesting himself of his cravat ! Why, he is stripping off his coat ! Well, here he is, sure enough, in a tight silk shirt, and with two things that look like batter puddings in the place of his fists. Now see that other fellow with another pair of batter puddings—the big one with the broad shoulders ; he will certainly knock the little man's head off, if he strikes him. Feinting, dodging, stopping, hitting, countering—little man's head not off yet. You might as well try to jump upon your own shadow as to hit the little man's intellectual features. He needn't have taken off the gold-bowed spectacles at all. Quick, cautious, shifty, nimble, cool, he catches all the fierce lunges or gets out of their reach, till his turn comes, and then, whack goes one of the batter puddings against the big one's ribs, and bang goes the other into the big one's face, and, staggering, shuffling, slipping, tripping, collapsing, sprawling, down goes the big one in a miscellaneous bundle. If my young friend, whose excellent article I have referred to, could only introduce the manly art of self-defence among the clergy, I am satisfied that we should have better sermons and an infinitely less quarrelsome church-militant. A bout with the gloves would let off the ill-nature, and cure the indigestion, which, united, have embroiled their subject in a bitter controversy. We should then often hear that a point of difference between an infallible and a heretic, instead of being vehemently discussed in a series of newspaper articles, had been settled by a friendly contest in several rounds, at the close of which the parties shook hands and appeared cordially reconciled.

But boxing you and I are too old for, I am afraid. I was for a

moment tempted, by the contagion of muscular electricity last evening, to try the gloves with the Benicia Boy, who looked in as a friend of the noble art; but remembering that he had twice my weight and half my age, besides the advantage of his training, I sat still and said nothing.

There is one other delicate point I wish to speak of with reference to old age. I refer to the use of dioptric media which correct the diminished refracting power of the humours of the eye—in other words, spectacles. I don't use them. All I ask is a large, fair type, a strong daylight or gaslight, and one yard of focal distance, and my eyes are as good as ever. But if *your* eyes fail, I can tell you something encouraging. There is now living in New York State an old gentleman who, perceiving his sight to fail, immediately took to exercising it on the finest print, and in this way fairly bullied Nature out of her foolish habit of taking liberties at five-and-forty or thereabout. And now this old gentleman performs the most extraordinary feats with his pen, showing that his eyes must be a pair of microscopes. I should be afraid to say to you how much he writes in the compass of a half-dime—whether the Psalms or the Gospels, or the Psalms *and* the Gospels, I won't be positive.

But now let me tell you this. If the time comes when you must lay down the fiddle and the bow, because your fingers are too stiff, and drop the ten-foot sculls, because your arms are too weak, and, after dallying awhile with eye-glasses, come at last to the undisguised reality of spectacles—if the time comes when that fire of life we spoke of has burned so low that where its flames reverberated there is only the sombre stain of regret, and where its coals glowed, only the white ashes that cover the embers of memory, don't let your heart grow cold, and you may carry cheerfulness and love with you into the teens of your second century, if you can last so long. As our friend the Poet once said, in some of those old-fashioned heroics of his which he keeps for his private reading—

Call him not old, whose visionary brain  
Holds o'er the past its undivided reign.  
For him in vain the envious seasons roll  
Who bears eternal summer in his soul.  
If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,  
Spring with her birds, or children with their play,  
Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art,  
Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart—  
Turn to the record where his years are told—  
Count his grey hairs—they cannot make him old !

*End of the Professor's Paper.*

[The above essay was not read at one time, but in several instalments, and accompanied by various comments from different persons at the table. The company were in the main attentive, with the exception of a little somnolence on the part of the old

gentleman opposite at times, and a few sly, malicious questions about the "old boys" on the part of that forward young fellow who has figured occasionally, not always to his advantage, in these reports.

On Sunday mornings, in obedience to a feeling I am not ashamed of, I have always tried to give a more appropriate character to our conversation. I have never read them my sermon yet, and I don't know that I shall, as some of them might take my convictions as a personal indignity to themselves. But having read our company so much of the Professor's talk about age and other matters connected with physical life, I took the next Sunday morning to repeat to them the following poem of his, which I have had by me some time. He calls it—I suppose for his professional friends—THE ANATOMIST'S HYMN ; but I shall name it—]

#### THE LIVING TEMPLE.

Not in the world of light alone,  
Where God has built His blazing throne,  
Nor yet alone in earth below,  
With belted seas that come and go,  
And endless isles of sunlit green,  
Is all thy Maker's glory seen :  
Look in upon thy wondrous frame—  
Eternal wisdom still the same !

The smooth, soft air, with pulse-like waves,  
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,  
Whose streams of brightening purple rush  
Fired with a new and livelier blush,  
While all their burden of decay  
The ebbing current steals away,  
And red with Nature's flame they start  
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,  
For ever quivering o'er his task,  
While far and wide a crimson jet  
Leaps forth to fill the woven net  
Which in unnumbered crossing tides  
The flood of burning life divides,  
Then kindling each decaying part  
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame,  
Behold the outward moving frame,  
Its living marbles jointed strong  
With glistening band and silvery thong,  
And linked to Reason's guiding reins  
By myriad rings in trembling chains,  
Each graven with the threaded zone  
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white  
Is braided out of seven-hued light,  
Yet in those lucid globes no ray  
By any chance shall break astray.

Hark how the rolling surge of sound,  
 Arches and spirals circling round,  
 Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear  
 With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds  
 All thought in its mysterious folds,  
 That feels sensation's faintest thrill,  
 And flashes forth the sovereign will ;  
 Think on the stormy world that dwells  
 Locked in its dim and clustering cells !  
 The lightning gleams of power it sheds  
 Along its hollow glassy threads.

O Father ! grant Thy love divine  
 To make these mystic temples Thine !  
 When wasting age and wearying strife  
 Have sapped the leaning walls of life,  
 When darkness gathers over all,  
 And the last tottering pillars fall,  
 Take the poor dust Thy mercy warms,  
 And mould it into heavenly forms !

### VIII.

[SPRING has come. You will find some verses to that effect at the end of these notes. If you are an impatient reader, skip to them at once. In reading aloud, omit, if you please, the sixth and seventh verses. These are parenthetical and digressive, and, unless your audience is of superior intelligence, will confuse them. Many people can ride on horseback who find it hard to get on and to get off without assistance. One has to dismount from an idea, and get into the saddle again, at every parenthesis.]—

The old gentleman who sits opposite, finding that spring had fairly come, mounted a white hat one day, and walked into the street. It seems to have been a premature or otherwise exceptionable exhibition, not unlike that commemorated by the late Mr. Bayly. When the old gentleman came home he looked very red in the face, and complained that he had been "made sport of." By sympathising questions, I learned from him that a boy had called him "old daddy," and asked him when he had his hat whitewashed.

This incident led me to make some observations at the table the next morning, which I here repeat for the benefit of the readers of this record.—

The hat is the vulnerable point of the artificial integument. I learned this in early boyhood. I was once equipped in a hat of Leghorn straw, having a brim of much wider dimensions than were usual at that time, and sent to school in that portion of my native town which lies nearest to this metropolis. On my way I was met by a "Port-chuck," as we used to call the young gentlemen of that locality, and the following dialogue ensued :—

*The Port-chuck.*—Hullo, You-sir, joo know th' wuz gōn-to be a race to-morra ?

*Myself.*—No. Who's gōn-to run, 'n' where's't gōn-to be?

*The Port-chuck.*—Squire Mico 'n' Doctor Williams, round the brim o' your hat.

These two much-respected gentlemen being the oldest inhabitants at that time, and the alleged race-course being out of the question, the Port-chuck also winking and thrusting his tongue into his cheek, I perceived that I had been trifled with, and the effect has been to make me sensitive and observant respecting this article of dress ever since. Here is an axiom or two relating to it.

A hat which has been *popped*, or exploded by being sat down upon, is never itself again afterwards.

It is a favourite illusion of sanguine natures to believe the contrary.

Shabby gentility has nothing so characteristic as its hat. There is always an unnatural calmness about its nap, and an unwholesome gloss, suggestive of a wet brush.

The last effort of decayed fortune is expended in smoothing its dilapidated castor. The hat is the *ultimum moriens* of "respectability."

The old gentleman took all these remarks and maxims very pleasantly, saying, however, that he had forgotten most of his French except the word for potatoes—*pummies de tare*. *Ultimum moriens*, I told him, is old Italian, and signifies *last thing to die*. With this explanation he was well contented, and looked quite calm when I saw him afterwards in the entry, with a black hat on his head, and the white one in his hand.

I think myself fortunate in having the Poet and the Professor for my intimates. We are so much together, that we no doubt think and talk a good deal alike; yet our points of view are in many respects individual and peculiar. You know me well enough by this time. I have not talked with you so long for nothing, and therefore I don't think it necessary to draw my own portrait. But let me say a word or two about my friends.

The Professor considers himself, and I consider him, a very useful and worthy kind of drudge. I think he has a pride in his small technicalities. I know that he has a great idea of fidelity; and though I suspect he laughs a little inwardly at times at the grand airs "Science" puts on, as she stands marking time, but not getting on, while the trumpets are blowing and the big drums beating—yet I am sure he has a liking for his speciality, and a respect for its cultivators.

But I'll tell you what the Professor said to the Poet the other day.—My boy, said he, I can work a great deal cheaper than you, because I keep all my goods in the lower storey. You have to hoist yours into the upper chambers of the brain, and let them down again to your customers. I take mine in at the level of the ground, and send them off from my doorstep almost without

lifting. I tell you, the higher a man has to carry the raw material of thought before he works it up, the more it costs him in blood, nerve, and muscle. Coleridge knew all this very well when he advised every literary man to have a profession.—

Sometimes I like to talk with one of them, and sometimes with the other. After a while I get tired of both. When a fit of intellectual disgust comes over me, I will tell you what I have found admirable as a diversion, in addition to boating and other amusements which I have spoken of,—that is, working at my carpenter's bench. Some mechanical employment is the greatest possible relief, after the purely intellectual faculties begin to tire. When I was quarantined once at Marseilles, I got to work immediately at carving a wooden wonder of loose rings on a stick, and got so interested in it, that, when we were set loose, I "regained my freedom with a sigh," because my toy was unfinished.

There are long seasons when I talk only with the Professor, and others when I give myself wholly up to the Poet. Now that my winter's work is over, and spring is with us, I feel naturally drawn to the Poet's company. I don't know any body more alive to life than he is. The passion of poetry seizes on him every spring, he says,—yet oftentimes he complains, that, when he feels most, he can sing least.

Then a fit of despondency comes over him.—I feel ashamed sometimes,—said he, the other day,—to think how far my worst songs fall below my best. It sometimes seems to me, as I know it does to others who have told me so, that they ought to be *all best*,—if not in actual execution, at least in plan and motive. I am grateful—he continued—for all such criticisms. A man is always pleased to have his most serious efforts praised, and the highest aspect of his nature get the most sunshine.

Yet I am sure, that, in the nature of things, many minds must change their key now and then, on penalty of getting out of tune or losing their voices. You know, I suppose,—he said,—what is meant by complimentary colours? You know the effect, too, which the prolonged impression of any one colour has on the retina. If you close your eyes after looking steadily at a *red* object, you see a *green* image.

It is so with many minds,—I will not say with all. After looking at one aspect of external nature, or of any form of beauty or truth, when they turn away, the *complimentary* aspect of the same object stamps itself irresistibly and automatically upon the mind. Shall they give expression to this secondary mental state, or not?

When I contemplate—said my friend the Poet—the infinite largeness of comprehension belonging to the Central Intelligence, how remote the creative conception is from all scholastic and ethical formulæ, I am led to think that a healthy mind ought to change its mood from time to time, and come down from its noblest condition,—never, of course, to degrade itself by dwelling



upon what is itself debasing, but to let its lower faculties have a chance to air and exercise themselves. After the first and second floor have been out in the bright street dressed in all their splendours, shall not our humble friends in the basement have their holiday, and the cotton velvet and the thin-skinned jewelry—simple adornments, but befitting the station of those who wear them—show themselves to the crowd, who think them beautiful, as they ought to, though the people up-stairs know that they are cheap and perishable?—

I don't know that I may not bring the Poet here, some day or other, and let him speak for himself. Still, I think I can tell you what he says quite as well as he could do it.—Oh, —he said to me, one day,—I am but a hand-organ man,—say rather a hand-organ. Life turns the winch, and fancy or accident pulls out the stops. I come under your windows, some fine spring morning, and play you one of my *adagio* movements, and some of you say,—This is good,—play us so always. But, dear friends, if I did not change the stops sometimes, the machine would wear out in one part and rust in another. How easily this or that tune flows!—you say,—there must be no end of just such melodies in him.—I will open the poor machine for you one moment, and you shall look.—Ah! Every note marks where a spur of steel has been driven in. It is easy to grind out the song, but to plant these bristling points which make it was the painful task of time.

I don't like to say it,—he continued,—but poets commonly have no larger stock of tunes than hand-organs; and when you hear them piping up under your window, you know pretty well what to expect. The more stops, the better. Do let them all be pulled out in their turn!

So spoke my friend the Poet, and read me one of his stateliest songs, and after it a gay *chanson*, and then a string of epigrams. All true,—he said,—all flowers of his soul; only one with the corolla spread, and another with its disk half opened, and the third with the heart-leaves covered up and only a petal or two showing its tip through the calyx. The water-lily is the type of the poet's soul,—he told me.—

What do you think, sir,—said the divinity-student,—opens the souls of poets most fully?

Why, there must be the internal force and the external stimulus. Neither is enough by itself. A rose will not flower in the dark, and a fern will not flower any where.

What do I think is the true sunshine that opens the poet's corolla?—I don't like to say. They spoil a good many, I am afraid; or at least they shine on a good many that never come to any thing.

Who are *they*?—said the schoolmistress.

Women. Their love first inspires the poet, and their praise is his best reward.

The schoolmistress reddened a little, but looked pleased.—



Did I really think so?—I do think so ; I never feel safe until I have pleased them ; I don't think they are the first to see one's defects, but they are the first to catch the colour and fragrance of a true poem. Fit the same intellect to a man, and it is a bow-string,—to a woman, and it is a harp-string. She is vibratile and resonant all over, so she stirs with lighter musical tremblings of the air about her. Ah me !—said my friend the Poet to me the other day,—what colour would it not have given to my thoughts, and what thrice-washed whiteness to my words, had I been fed on women's praises ? I should have grown like Marvell's fawn,—

“ Lilies without ; roses within ! ”

But then,—he added,—we all think, *if* so and so, we should have been this or that, as you were saying, the other day, in those rhymes of yours.—

I don't think there are many poets in the sense of creators ; but of those sensitive natures which reflect themselves naturally in soft and melodious words, pleading for sympathy with their joys and sorrows, every literature is full. Nature carves with her own hand the brain which holds the creative imagination, but she casts the over-sensitive creatures in scores from the same mould.

There are two kinds of poets, just as there are two kinds of blondes. [Movement of curiosity among our ladies at table.—Please to tell us about those blondes, said the schoolmistress.] Why, there are blondes who are such simply by deficiency of colouring-matter, *negative* or *washed* blondes, arrested by nature on the way to become albinesses. There are others that are shot through with golden light, with tawny or fulvous tinges in various degree,—*positive* or *stained* blondes, dipped in yellow sunbeams, and as unlike in their mode of being to the others as an orange is unlike a snowball. The albino-style carries with it a wide pupil and a sensitive retina. The other, or the leonine blonde, has an opaline fire in her clear eye, which the brunette can hardly match with her quick, glittering glances.

Just so we have the great sun-kindled, constructive imaginations, and a far more numerous class of poets who have a certain kind of moonlight-genius given them to compensate for their imperfection of nature. Their want of mental colouring-matter makes them sensitive to those impressions which stronger minds neglect or never feel at all. Many of them die young, and all of them are tinged with melancholy. There is no more beautiful illustration of the principle of compensation which marks the Divine benevolence than the fact that some of the holiest lives and some of the sweetest songs are the growth of the infirmity which unfits its subject for the rougher duties of life. When one reads the life of Cowper, or of Keats, or of Lucretia and Margaret Davidson,—of so many gentle, sweet natures, born to weakness, and mostly dying before their time,—one cannot help

thinking that the human race dies out singing, like the swan in the old story. The French poet, Gilbert, who died at the Hôtel Dieu, at the age of twenty-nine—(killed by a key in his throat, which he had swallowed when delirious in consequence of a fall)—this poor fellow was a very good example of the poet by excess of sensibility. I found, the other day, that some of my literary friends had never heard of him, though I suppose few educated Frenchmen do not know the lines which he wrote, a week before his death, upon a mean bed in the great hospital of Paris.

"Au banquet de la vie, infortuné convive,  
J'apparus un jour, et je meurs;  
Je meurs, et sur ma tombe, où lentement j'arrive,  
Nul ne viendra verser des pleurs."

At life's gay banquet placed, a poor unhappy guest,  
One day I pass, then disappear:  
I die, and on the tomb where I at length shall rest  
No friend shall come to shed a tear.

You remember the same thing in other words somewhere in Kirke White's poems. It is the burden of the plaintive songs of all these sweet albino-poets. "I shall die and be forgotten, and the world will go on just as if I had never been;—and yet how I have loved! how I have longed! how I have aspired!" and so singing, their eyes grow brighter and brighter, and their features thinner and thinner, until at last the veil of flesh is threadbare, and, still singing, they drop it and pass onward.

Our brains are seventy-year clocks. The Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case, and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection.

Tic-tac! tic-tac! go the wheels of thought; our will cannot stop them; they cannot stop themselves; sleep cannot still them; madness only makes them go faster; death alone can break into the case, and, seizing the ever-swinging pendulum, which we call the heart, silence at last the clicking of the terrible escapement we have carried so long beneath our wrinkled foreheads.

If we could only get at them, as we lie on our pillows and count the dead beats of thought after thought and image after image jarring through the over-tired organ! Will nobody block those wheels, uncouple that pinion, cut the string that holds those weights, blow up the infernal machine with gunpowder? What a passion comes over us sometimes for silence and rest!—that this dreadful mechanism, unwinding the endless tapestry of time, embroidered with spectral figures of life and death, could have but one brief holiday! Who can wonder that men swing themselves off from beams in hempen lassos?—that they jump off from parapets into the swift and gurgling waters beneath?—that they take counsel of the grim friend who has but to utter his one peremptory monosyllable, and the restless ma-

chine is shivered as a vase that is dashed upon a marble floor. Under that building which we pass every day there are strong dungeons, where neither hook, nor bar, nor bed-cord, nor drinking vessel from which a sharp fragment may be shattered, shall by any chance be seen. There is nothing for it, when the brain is on fire with the whirling of its wheels, but to spring against the stone wall and silence them with one crash. Ah, they remembered that,—the kind city fathers,—and the walls are nicely padded, so that one can take such exercise as he likes without damaging himself on the very plain but serviceable upholstery. If anybody would only contrive some kind of a lever that one could thrust in among the works of this horrid automaton and check them, or alter their rate of going, what would the world give for the discovery?—

From half a dime to a dime, according to the style of the place and the quality of the liquor,—said the young fellow whom they call John.

You speak trivially, but not unwisely,—I said. Unless the will maintain a certain control over these movements, which it cannot stop, but can to some extent regulate, men are very apt to try to get at the machine by some indirect system of leverage or other. They clap on the brakes by means of opium; they change the maddening monotony of the rhythm by means of fermented liquors. It is because the brain is locked up and we cannot touch its movement directly, that we thrust these coarse tools in through any crevice by which they may reach the interior, and so alter its rate of going for a while, and at last spoil the machine.

Men who exercise chiefly those faculties of the mind which work independently of the will,—poets and artists, for instance, who follow their imagination in their creative moments, instead of keeping it in hand as your logicians and practical men do with their reasoning faculty,—such men are too apt to call in the mechanical appliances to help them govern their intellects.—

He means they get drunk,—said the young fellow already alluded to by name.

Do you think men of true genius are apt to indulge in the use of inebriating fluids?—said the divinity-student.

If you think you are strong enough to bear what I am going to say,—I replied,—I will talk to you about this. But mind, now, these are the things that some foolish people call *dangerous* subjects,—as if these vices which burrow into people's souls, as the Guinea-worm burrows into the naked feet of West-Indian slaves, would be more mischievous when seen than out of sight. Now the true way to deal with those obstinate animals, which are a dozen feet long, some of them, and no bigger than a horse-hair, is to get a piece of silk round their *heads* and pull them out very cautiously. If you only break them off they grow worse than ever, and sometimes kill the person who has the

misfortune to harbour one of them. Whence it is plain that the first thing to do is to find out where the head lies.

Just so of all the vices, and particularly of this vice of intemperance. What is the head of it, and where does it lie? For you may depend upon it, there is not one of these vices that has not a head of its own,—an intelligence,—a meaning,—a certain virtue, I was going to say,—but that might, perhaps, sound paradoxical. I have heard an immense number of moral physicians lay down the treatment of moral Guinea-worms, and the vast majority of them would always insist that the creature had no head at all, but was all body and tail. So I have found a very common result of their method to be that the string slipped, or that a piece only of the creature was broken off, and the worm soon grew again, as bad as ever. The truth is, if the Devil could only appear in church by attorney, and make the best statement that the facts would bear him out in doing on behalf of his special virtues (what we commonly call vices), the influence of good teachers would be much greater than it is. For the arguments by which the Devil prevails are precisely the ones that the Devil-queller most rarely answers. The way to argue down a vice is, not to tell lies about it,—to say that it has no attractions, when everybody knows that it has,—but rather to let it make out its case just as it certainly will in the moment of temptation, and then meet it with the weapons furnished by the Divine armoury. Ithuriel did not spit the toad on his spear, you remember, but touched him with it, and the blasted angel took the sad glories of his true shape. If he had shown fight then, the fair spirits would have known how to deal with him.

That all spasmodic cerebral action is an evil is not perfectly clear. Men get fairly intoxicated with music, with poetry, with religious excitement,—oftenest with love. Ninon de l'Enclos said she was so easily excited that her soup intoxicated her, and convalescents have been made tipsy by a beefsteak.

There are forms and stages of alcoholic exaltation, which, in themselves, and without regard to their consequences, might be considered as positive improvements of the persons affected. When the sluggish intellect is roused, the slow speech quickened, the cold nature warmed, the latent sympathy developed, the flagging spirit kindled—before the trains of thought become confused, or the will perverted, or the muscles relaxed—just at the moment when the whole human zoophyte flowers out like a full-blown rose, and is ripe for the subscription-paper or the contribution-box—it would be hard to say that a man was, at that very time, worse or less to be loved, than when driving a hard bargain, with all his meaner wits about him. The difficulty is, that the alcoholic virtues don't wash; but until the water takes their colours out, the tints are very much like those of the true celestial stuff.

[Here I was interrupted by a question which I am very un-

willing to report, but have confidence enough in those friends who examine these records to commit to their candour.

A *person* at table asked me whether I "went in for rum as a steady drink?"—His manner made the question highly offensive, but I restrained myself, and answered thus :—]

Rum I take to be the name which unwashed moralists apply alike to the product distilled from mollasses and the noblest juices of the vineyard. Burgundy "in all its sunset glow" is rum. Champagne, "the foaming wine of Eastern France," is rum. Hock, which our friend the Poet speaks of as

"The Rhine's breast-milk, gushing cold and bright,  
Pale as the moon, and maddening as her light,"

is rum. Sir, I repudiate the loathsome vulgarism as an insult to the first miracle wrought by the Founder of our religion! I address myself to the company. I believe in temperance, nay, almost in abstinence, as a rule for healthy people. I trust that I practise both. But let me tell you there are companies of men of genius into which I sometimes go, where the atmosphere of intellect and sentiment is so much more stimulating than alcohol, that, if I thought fit to take wine, it would be to keep me sober.

Among the gentlemen that I have known, few, if any, were ruined by drinking. My few drunken acquaintances were generally ruined before they became drunkards. The habit of drinking is often a vice, no doubt,—sometimes a misfortune, as when an almost irresistible hereditary propensity exists to indulge in it,—but oftenest of all a *punishment*.

Empty heads—heads without ideas in wholesome variety and sufficient number to furnish food for the mental clockwork—ill-regulated heads, where the faculties are not under the control of the will—these are the ones that hold the brains which their owners are so apt to tamper with, by introducing the appliances we have been talking about. Now, when a gentleman's brain is empty or ill-regulated, it is, to a great extent, his own fault; and so it is simple retribution, that, while he lies slothfully sleeping or aimlessly dreaming, the fatal habit settles on him like a vampire, and sucks his blood, fanning him all the while with its hot wings into deeper slumber or idler dreams! I am not such a hard-souled being as to apply this to the neglected poor, who have had no chance to fill their heads with wholesome ideas, and to be taught the lesson of self-government. I trust the tariff of heaven has an *ad valorem* scale for them—and all of us.

But to come back to poets and artists :—if they really are more prone to the abuse of stimulants—and I fear that this is true—the reason of it is only too clear. A man abandons himself to a fine frenzy, and the power which flows through him, as I once explained to you, makes him the medium of a great poem or a great picture. The creative action is not voluntary at all, but automatic; we can only put the mind into the proper attitude, and wait for the wind, that blows where it

listeth, to breathe over it. Thus the true state of creative genius is allied to *reverie*, or dreaming. If mind and body were both healthy and had food enough and fair play, I doubt whether any men would be more temperate than the imaginative classes. But body and mind often flag—perhaps they are ill-made to begin with, under-fed with bread or ideas, overworked, or abused in some way. The automatic action, by which genius wrought its wonders, fails. There is only one thing which can rouse the machine : not will—that cannot reach it ; nothing but a ruinous agent, which hurries the wheels awhile and soon eats out the heart of the mechanism. The dreaming faculties are always the dangerous ones, because their mode of action can be imitated by artificial excitement; the reasoning ones are safe, because they imply continued voluntary effort.

I think you will find it true, that, before any vice can fasten on a man, body, mind, or moral nature must be debilitated. The mosses and fungi gather on sickly trees, not thriving ones ; and the odious parasites which fasten on the human frame choose that which is already enfeebled. Mr. Walker, the hygeian humorist, declared that he had such a healthy skin, it was impossible for any impurity to stick to it, and maintained that it was an absurdity to wash a face which was of necessity always clean. I don't know how much fancy there was in this ; but there is no fancy in saying that the lassitude of tired-out operatives, and the languor of imaginative natures in their periods of collapse, and the vacuity of minds untrained to labour and discipline, fit the soul and body for the germination of the seeds of intemperance.

Whenever the wandering demon of Drunkenness finds a ship adrift—no steady wind in its sails, no thoughtful pilot directing its course—he steps on board, takes the helm, and steers straight for the maelstrom.

I wonder if you know the *terrible smile* ? [The young fellow whom they call John winked very hard, and made a jocular remark, the sense of which seemed to depend on some double meaning of the word *smile*. The company was curious to know what I meant.]

There are persons, I said, who no sooner come within sight of you, than they begin to smile, with an uncertain movement of the mouth, which conveys the idea that they are thinking about themselves, and thinking, too, that you are thinking they are thinking about themselves ; and so look at you with a wretched mixture of self-consciousness, awkwardness, and attempts to carry off both, which are betrayed by the cowardly behaviour of the eye and the tell-tale weakness of the lips that characterise these unfortunate beings.

Why do you call them unfortunate, sir ? asked the divinity-student.

Because it is evident that the consciousness of some imbecility or other is at the bottom of this extraordinary expression. I don't think, however, that these persons are commonly fools. I have known a number, and all of them were intelligent. I think nothing conveys the idea of *under-breeding* more than this self-betraying smile. Yet I think this peculiar habit, as well as that of *meaningless blushing*, may be fallen into by very good people who meet often, or sit opposite each other at table. A true gentleman's face is infinitely removed from all such paltriness—calm-eyed, firm-mouthed. I think Titian understood the look of a gentleman as well as anybody that ever lived. The portrait of a young man holding a glove in his hand, in the Gallery of the Louvre, if any of you have seen that collection, will remind you of what I mean.

Do I think these people know the peculiar look they have?—I cannot say; I hope not: I am afraid they would never forgive me if they did. The worst of it is, the trick is catching; when one meets one of these fellows, he feels a tendency to the same manifestation. The Professor tells me there is a muscular slip, a dependence of the *platysma myoides*, which is called the *risorius Santorini*.

Say that once more, exclaimed the young fellow mentioned above.

The Professor says there is a little fleshy slip called Santorini's laughing muscle. I would have it cut out of my face, if I were born with one of those constitutional grins upon it. Perhaps I am uncharitable in my judgment of those sour-looking people I told you of the other day, and of these smiling folks. It may be that they are born with these looks, as other people are with more generally recognised deformities. Both are bad enough; but I had rather meet three of the scowlers than one of the smilers.—

There is another unfortunate way of looking, which is peculiar to that amiable sex we do not like to find fault with. There are some very pretty, but, unhappily, very ill-bred women, who don't understand the law of the road with regard to handsome faces. Nature and custom would, no doubt, agree in conceding to all males the right of at least two distinct looks at every comely female countenance, without any infraction of the rules of courtesy or the sentiment of respect. The first look is necessary to define the person of the individual one meets, so as to avoid it in passing. Any unusual attraction detected in a first glance is a sufficient apology for a second; not a prolonged and impertinent stare, but an appreciating homage of the eyes, such as a stranger may inoffensively yield to a passing image. It is astonishing how morbidly sensitive some vulgar beauties are to the slightest demonstration of this kind. When a *lady* walks the streets, she leaves her virtuous-indignation countenance at home; she knows well enough that the street is a picture-gallery, where



pretty faces framed in pretty bonnets are meant to be seen, and every body has a right to see them.

When we observe how the same features and style of person and character descend from generation to generation, we can believe that some inherited weakness may account for these peculiarities. Little snapping-turtles snap—so the great naturalist tells us—before they are out of the egg-shell. I am satisfied that, much higher up in the scale of life, character is distinctly shown at the age of two or three months.—

My friend the Professor has been full of eggs lately. [This remark excited a burst of hilarity which I did not allow to interrupt the course of my observations.] He has been reading the great book where he found the fact about the little snapping-turtles mentioned above. Some of the things he has told me have suggested several odd analogies enough.

There are half a dozen men or so who carry in their brains the *ovarian eggs* of the next generation's or century's civilization. These eggs are not ready to be laid in the form of books as yet; some of them are hardly ready to be put into the form of talk. But as rudimentary ideas or inchoate tendencies, there they are; and these are what must form the future. A man's general notions are not good for much, unless he has a crop of these intellectual ovarian eggs in his own brain, or knows them as they exist in the minds of others. One must be in the *habit* of talking with such persons to get at these rudimentary germs of thought; for their development is necessarily imperfect, and they are moulded on new patterns, which must be long and closely studied. But these are the men to talk with. No fresh truth ever gets into a book.

A good many fresh lies get in, any how, said one of the company.

I proceeded in spite of the interruption.—All uttered thought, my friend the Professor says, is of the nature of an excretion. Its materials have been taken in, and have acted upon the system, and been reacted on by it; it has circulated and done its office in one mind before it is given out for the benefit of others. It may be milk or venom to other minds; but, in either case, it is something which the producer has had the use of and can part with. A man instinctively tries to get rid of his thought in conversation or in print so soon as it is matured; but it is hard to get at it as it lies imbedded—a mere potentiality, the germ of a germ—in his intellect.

Where are the brains that are fullest of these ovarian eggs of thought?—I decline mentioning individuals. The producers of thought, who are few; the "jobbers" of thought, who are many; and the retailers of thought, who are numberless—are so mixed up in the popular apprehension, that it would be hopeless to try to separate them before opinion has had time to settle. Follow the course of opinion on the great subjects of human interest



for a few generations or centuries ; get its parallax ; map out a small arc of its movement ; see where it tends—and then see who is in advance of it or even with it ; the world calls him hard names, probably ; but if you would find the *ova* of the future, you must look into the folds of his cerebral convolutions.

[The divinity-student looked a little puzzled at this suggestion, as if he did not see exactly where he was to come out, if he computed his arc too nicely. I think it possible it might cut off a few corners of his present belief, as it has cut off martyr-burning and witch-hanging ; but time will show, time will show, as the old gentleman opposite says.]—

Oh, here is that copy of verses I told you about :—

### SPRING HAS COME.

#### *Intra Muros.*

The sunbeams lost for half a year,  
Slant through my pane their morning's rays ;  
For dry Northwesters, cold and clear,  
The East blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen,  
Then close against the sheltering wall  
The tulip's horn of dusky green,  
The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns ;  
The long narcissus-blades appear ;  
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns,  
And lights her blue-flamed chandelier.

The willow's whistling lashes, wrung  
By the wild winds of gusty March,  
With sallow leaflets lightly strung,  
Are swaying by the tufted larch.

The elms have robbed their slender spray  
With full-blown flower and embryo leaf ;  
Wide o'er the clasping arch of day  
Soars like a cloud their hoary chief.

[See the proud tulip's flaunting cup,  
That flames in glory for an hour—  
Behold it withering—then look up—  
How meek the forest-monarch's flower !

When wake the violets, Winter dies ;  
When sprout the elm-buds, Spring is near ;  
When lilacs blossom, Summer cries,  
" Bud, little roses ! Spring is here !" ]

The windows blush with fresh bouquets,  
Cut with the May-dew on their lips ;  
The radish all its bloom displays,  
Pink as Aurora's finger-tips.

Nor less the flood of light that showers  
On beauty's changed corolla-shades—  
The walks are gay as bridal bowers  
With rows of many-petalled maids.

The scarlet shell-fish click and clash  
 In the blue barrow where they slide ;  
 The horseman, proud of streak and splash,  
 Creeps homeward from his morning ride.

Here comes the dealer's awkward string,  
 With neck in rope and tail in knot—  
 Rough colts, with careless country-swing,  
 In lazy walk or slouching trot.

Wild filly from the mountain-side,  
 Doomed to the close and chafing thills,  
 Lend me thy long, untiring stride  
 To seek with thee thy western hills !

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,  
 The thrush's trill, the cat-bird's cry,  
 Like some poor bird with prisoned wing  
 That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

Oh, for one spot of living green—  
 One little spot where leaves can grow—  
 To love unblamed, to walk unseen,  
 To dream above, to sleep below !

## IX.

[*Aquí está encerrada el alma del licenciado Pedro Garcias.*

If I should ever make a little book out of these papers, which I hope you are not getting tired of, I suppose I ought to save the above sentence for a motto on the title-page. But I want it now, and must use it. I need not say to you that the words are Spanish, nor that they are to be found in the short Introduction to *Gil Blas*, nor that they mean, "Here lies buried the soul of the licenciado Pedro Garcias."

I warned all young people off the premises when I began my notes referring to old age. I must be equally fair with old people now. They are earnestly requested to leave this paper to young persons from the age of twelve to that of fourscore years and ten, at which latter period of life I am sure that I shall have at least one youthful reader. You know well enough what I mean by youth and age; something in the soul, which has no more to do with the colour of the hair than the vein of gold in a rock has to do with the grass a thousand feet above it.

I am growing bolder as I write. I think it requires not only youth, but genius, to read this paper. I don't mean to imply that it required any whatsoever to talk what I have here written down. It did demand a certain amount of memory, and such command of the English tongue as is given by a common school education. So much I do claim. But here I have related at length a string of trivialities. You must have the imagination of a poet to transfigure them. These little coloured patches are stains upon the windows of a human soul; stand on the outside, they are but dull and meaningless spots of colour; seen from within, they are glorified shapes with empurpled wings and sun-bright aureoles.

My hand trembles when I offer you this. Many times I have come bearing flowers such as my garden grew; but now I offer you this poor, brown, homely growth, you may cast it away as worthless. And yet—and yet—it is something better than flowers; it is a *seed-capsule*. Many a gardener will cut you a bouquet of his choicest blossoms for small fee, but he does not love to let the seeds of his rarest varieties go out of his own hands.

It is by little things that we know ourselves; a soul would very probably mistake itself for another, when once disembodied, were it not for individual experiences which differ from those of others only in details seemingly trifling. All of us have been thirsty thousands of times, and felt, with Pindar, that water was the best of things. I alone, as I think, of all mankind, remember one particular pailful of water, flavoured with the white pine of which the pail was made, and the brown mug out of which one Edmund, a red-faced and curly-haired boy, was averred to have bitten a fragment in his haste to drink; it being then high summer, and little full-blooded boys feeling very warm and porous in the low-“studded” school-room where Dame Prentiss, dead and gone, ruled over young children, many of whom are old ghosts now, and have known Abraham for twenty or thirty years of our mortal time.

Thirst belongs to humanity, everywhere, in all ages; but that white-pine pail and that brown mug belong to me in particular; and just so of my special relationships with other things and with my race. One could never remember himself in eternity by the mere fact of having loved or hated any more than by that of having thirsted; love and hate have no more individuality in them than single waves in the ocean;—but the accidents or trivial marks which distinguished those whom we loved or hated make their memory our own for ever, and with it that of our own personality also.

Therefore, my aged friend of five-and-twenty, or thereabouts, pause at the threshold of this particular record, and ask yourself seriously whether you are fit to read such revelations as are to follow. For observe, you have here no splendid array of petals such as poets offer you,—nothing but a dry shell, containing, if you will get out what is in it, a few small seeds of poems. You may laugh at them, if you like. I shall never tell you what I think of you for so doing. But if you can read into the heart of these things, in the light of other memories as slight, yet as dear to your soul, then you are neither more nor less than a POET, and can afford to write no more verses during the rest of your natural life,—which abstinence I take to be one of the surest marks of your meriting the divine name I have just bestowed upon you.

May I beg of you who have begun this paper, nobly trusting to your own imagination and sensibilities to give it the significance which it does not lay claim to without your kind assistance,—may I beg of you, I say, to pay particular attention to

the *brackets* which enclose certain paragraphs? I want my "asides," you see, to whisper loud to you who read my notes, and sometimes I talk a page or two to you without pretending that I said a word of it to our boarders. You will find a very long "aside" to you almost as soon as you begin to read. And so, dear young friend, fall to at once, taking such things as I have provided for you; and if you turn them, by the aid of your powerful imagination, into a fair banquet, why, then, peace be with you, and a summer by the still waters of some quiet river, or by some yellow beach, where, as my friend the Professor says, you can sit with Nature's wrist in your hand and count her ocean-pulses.]

I should like to make a few intimate revelations relating especially to my early life, if I thought you would like to hear them.

[The schoolmistress turned a little in her chair, and sat with her face directed partly towards me.—Half-mourning now;—purple ribbon. That breastpin she wears has *gray* hair in it; her mother's, no doubt;—I remember our landlady's daughter telling me, soon after the schoolmistress came to board with us, that she had lately "buried a pay-rent." That's what made her look so pale,—kept the poor dying thing alive with her own blood. Ah, long illness is the real vampirism; think of living a year or two after one is dead, by sucking the life-blood out of a frail young creature at one's bedside! Well, souls grow white, as well as cheeks, in these holy duties; one that goes in a nurse, may come out an angel.—God bless all good women!—to their soft hands and pitying hearts we must all come at last!—The schoolmistress has a better colour than when she came.—Too late!—"It might have been."—Amen!—

How many thoughts go to a dozen heartbeats sometimes! There was no long pause after my remark addressed to the company, but in that time I had the train of ideas and feelings I have just given flash through my consciousness sudden and sharp as the crooked red streak that springs out of its black sheath like the creese of a Malay in his death-race, and stabs the earth right and left in its blind rage.

I don't deny that there was a pang in it,—yes, a stab; but there was a prayer, too,—the "Amen" belonged to that.—Also a vision of a four-storey brick-house, nicely furnished,—I actually saw many specific articles,—curtains, sofas, tables, and others, and could draw the patterns of them at this moment,—a brick-house, I say, looking out on the water, with a fair parlour, and books, and busts, and pots of flowers, and bird-cages, all complete; and at the window, looking on the water, two of us.—"Male and female created He them."—These two were standing at the window, when a smaller shape that was playing near them looked up at me with such a look that I———poured out a glass of water, drank it all down, and then continued.]

I said I should like to tell you some things, such as people

commonly never tell, about my early recollections. Should you like to hear them?

Should we *like* to hear them?—said the schoolmistress;—no, but we should *love* to.

[The voice was a sweet one, naturally, and had something very pleasant in its tone, just then.—The four-storey brick house, which had gone out like a transparency when the light behind it is quenched, glimmered again for a moment; parlour, books, busts, flower-pots, bird-cages, all complete—and the figures as before.]

We are waiting with eagerness, sir, said the divinity-student.

[The transparency went out as if a flash of black lightning had struck it.]

If you want to hear my confessions, the next thing—I said—is to know whether I can trust you with them. It is only fair to say that there are a great many people in the world that laugh at such things. I think they are fools, but perhaps you don't all agree with me.

Here are children of tender age talked to as if they were capable of understanding Calvin's *Institutes*, and nobody has honesty or sense enough to tell the plain truth about the little wretches: that they are as superstitious as naked savages, and such miserable spiritual cowards—that is, if they have any imagination—that they will believe anything which is taught them, and a great deal more which they teach themselves.

I was born and bred, as I have told you twenty times, among books and those who knew what was in books. I was carefully instructed in things temporal and spiritual. But up to a considerable maturity of childhood I believed Raphael and Michael Angelo to have been superhuman beings. The central doctrine of the prevalent religious faith of Christendom was utterly confused and neutralised in my mind for years by one of those too common stories of actual life, which I overheard repeated in a whisper. Why did I not ask? you will say. You don't remember the rosy pudency of sensitive children. The first instinctive movement of the little creatures is to make a *cache*, and bury in it beliefs, doubts, dreams, hopes, and terrors. I am uncovering one of these *caches*. Do you think I was necessarily a greater fool and coward than another?

I was afraid of ships. Why, I could never tell. The masts looked frightfully tall, but they were not so tall as the steeple of our old yellow meeting-house. At any rate I used to hide my eyes from the sloops and schooners that were wont to lie at the end of the bridge, and I confess that traces of this undefined terror lasted very long. One other source of alarm had a still more fearful significance. There was a great wooden HAND—a glovemaker's sign, which used to swing and creak in the blast, as it hung from a pillar before a certain shop a mile or two outside of the city. Oh, the dreadful hand! Always hanging there

ready to catch up a little boy, who would come home to supper no more, nor yet to bed—whose porringer would be laid away empty thenceforth, and his half-worn shoes wait until his smaller brother grew to fit them.

As for all manner of superstitious observances, I used once to think I must have been peculiar in having such a list of them, but I now believe that half the children of the same age go through the same experiences. No Roman soothsayer ever had such a catalogue of *omens* as I found in the Sibylline leaves of my childhood. That trick of throwing a stone at a tree and attaching some mighty issue to hitting or missing, which you will find mentioned in one or more biographies, I well remember. Stepping on or over certain particular things or spots—Dr. Johnson's especial weakness—I got the habit of at a very early age—I won't swear that I have not some tendency to these not wise practices even at this present date. [How many of you that read these notes can say the same thing?]

With these follies mingled sweet delusions, which I loved so well I would not outgrow them, even when it required a voluntary effort to put a momentary trust in them. Here is one which I cannot help telling you.

The firing of the great guns at the Navy-Yard is easily heard at the place where I was born and lived. "There is a ship of war come in," they used to say, when they heard them. Of course, I supposed that such vessels came in unexpectedly, after indefinite years of absence—suddenly as falling stones—and that the great guns roared in their astonishment and delight at the sight of the old war-ship splitting the bay with her cutwater. Now, the sloop-of-war the *Wasp*, Captain Blakely, after gloriously capturing the *Reindeer* and the *Avon*, had disappeared from the face of the ocean, and was supposed to be lost. But there was no proof of it, and, of course, for a time hopes were entertained that she might be heard from. Long after the last real chance had utterly vanished, I pleased myself with the fond illusion that somewhere on the waste of waters she was still floating, and there were *years* during which I never heard the sound of the great guns booming inland from the Navy-Yard without saying to myself, "The *Wasp* has come!" and almost thinking I could see her, as she rolled in, crumpling the water before her, weather-beaten, barnacled, with shattered spars and threadbare canvas, welcomed by the shouts and tears of thousands. This was one of those dreams that I nursed and never told. Let me make a clean breast of it now, and say, that, so late as to have outgrown childhood, perhaps to have got far on towards manhood, when the roar of the cannon has struck suddenly on my ear, I have started with a thrill of vague expectation and tremulous delight, and the long-unspoken words have articulated themselves in the mind's dumb whisper, *The Wasp has come!*—

Yes, children believe plenty of queer things. I suppose all of you have had the pocket-book fever when you were little? What do I mean? Why, ripping up old pocket-books in the firm belief that bank-bills to an immense amount were hidden in them. So, too, you must all remember some splendid unfulfilled promise of somebody or other, which fed you with hopes perhaps for years, and which left a blank in your life which nothing has ever filled up. O. T. quitted our household, carrying with him the passionate regrets of the more youthful members. He was an ingenious youngster; wrote wonderful copies, and carved the two initials given above with great skill on all available surfaces. I thought, by the way, they were all gone; but the other day I found them on a certain door which I will show you some time. How it surprised me to find them so near the ground! I had thought the boy of no trivial dimensions. Well, O. T., when he went, made a solemn promise to two of us. I was to have a ship, and the other a *martin*-house (last syllable pronounced as in the word *tin*). Neither ever came; but, oh, how many and many a time I have stolen to the corner—the cars pass close by it at this time—and looked up that long avenue, thinking that he must be coming now almost sure, as I turned to look northward, that there he would be, trudging toward me, the ship in one hand and the *martin*-house in the other!

[You must not suppose that all I am going to say, as well as all I have said, was told to the whole company. The young fellow whom they call John was in the yard, sitting on a barrel and smoking a cheroot, the fumes of which came in, not ungrateful, through the open window. The divinity-student disappeared in the midst of our talk. The poor relation in black bombazine, who looked and moved as if all her articulations were elbow-joints, had gone off to her chamber, after waiting with a look of soul-subduing decorum at the foot of the stairs until one of the male sort had ascended into the upper regions. This is a famous point of etiquette in our boarding-house; in fact, between ourselves, they make such an awful fuss about it, that I, for one, had a great deal rather have them simple enough not to think of such matters at all. Our landlady's daughter said the other evening, that she was going to "retire;" whereupon the young fellow called John took up a lamp and insisted on lighting her to the foot of the staircase. Nothing would induce her to pass by him, until the schoolmistress, saying in good plain English that it was her bedtime, walked straight by them both, and not seeming to trouble herself about either of them.]

I have been led away from what I meant the portion included in these brackets to inform my readers about: I say, then, most of the boarders had left the table about the time when I began telling some of these secrets of mine—all of them, in fact, but the old gentleman opposite and the schoolmistress. I understand



why a young woman should like to hear these simple but genuine experiences of early life, which are, as I have said, the little brown seeds of what may yet grow to be poems with leaves of azure and gold; but when the old gentleman pushed up his chair nearer to me, and slanted round his best ear, and once, when I was speaking of some trifling, tender reminiscence, drew a long breath, with such a tremor in it that a little more and it would have been a sob, why, then I felt there must be something of nature in them which redeemed their seeming insignificance. Tell me, man or woman, with whom I am whispering, have you not a small store of recollections, such as these I am uncovering, buried beneath the dead leaves of many summers, perhaps under the unmelting snows of fast-returning winters—a few such recollections, which, if you should write them all out, would be swept into some careless editor's drawer, and might cost a scanty half-hour's lazy reading to his subscribers—and yet, if Death should cheat you of them, you would not know yourself in eternity? ]—

I made three acquaintances at a very early period of life, my introduction to whom was never forgotten. The first unequivocal act of wrong that has left its trace in my memory was this: refusing a small favour asked of me,—nothing more than telling what had happened at school one morning. No matter who asked it; but there were circumstances which saddened and awed me. I had no heart to speak; I faltered some miserable, perhaps petulant excuse, stole away, and the first battle of life was lost. What remorse followed I need not tell. Then and there, to the best of my knowledge, I first consciously took Sin by the hand and turned my back on Duty. Time has led me to look upon my offence more leniently; I do not believe it or any other childish wrong is infinite, as some have pretended, but infinitely finite. Yet, oh, if I had but won that battle?

The great Destroyer, whose awful shadow it was that had silenced me, came near me,—but never, so as to be distinctly seen and remembered, during my tender years. There flits dimly before me the image of a little girl, whose name even I have forgotten, a schoolmate whom we missed one day, and were told that she had died. But what death was I never had any very distinct idea, until one day I climbed the low stone wall of the old burial-ground and mingled with a group that were looking into a very deep, long, narrow hole, dug down through the green sod, down through the brown loam, down through the yellow gravel, and there at the bottom was an oblong red box, and a still, sharp, white face of a young man seen through an opening at one end of it. When the lid was closed, and the gravel and stones rattled down pell-mell, and the woman in black, who was crying and wringing her hands, went off with the other mourners, and left him, then I felt that I had seen Death, and should never forget him.

One other acquaintance I made at an earlier period of life than the habit of romancers authorises,—Love, of course.—She was a

famous beauty afterwards.—I am satisfied that many children rehearse their parts in the drama of life before they have shed all their milk-teeth.—I think I won't tell the story of the golden blonde.—I suppose everybody has had his childish fancies ; but sometimes they are passionate impulses, which anticipate all the tremulous emotions belonging to a later period. Most children remember seeing and adoring an angel before they were a dozen years old.

[The old gentleman had left his chair opposite and taken a seat by the schoolmistress and myself, a little way from the table.—It's true, it's true, said the old gentleman.—He took hold of a steel watch-chain, which carried a large, square gold key at one end and was supposed to have some kind of time-keeper at the other. With some trouble he dragged up an ancient-looking, thick, silver, bull's-eye watch. He looked at it for a moment,—hesitated,—touched the inner corner of his right eye with the pulp of his middle finger,—looked at the face of the watch,—said it was getting into the forenoon,—then opened the watch and handed me the loose outside case without a word.—The watch-paper had been pink once and had a faint tinge still, as if all its tender life had not yet quite faded out. Two little birds, a flower, and, in small school-girl letters, a date,—17 . . —no matter.—Before I was thirteen years old,—said the old gentleman.—I don't know what was in that young schoolmistress's head, nor why she should have done it ; but she took out the watch-paper and put it softly to her lips, as if she were kissing the poor thing that made it so long ago. The old gentleman took the watch-paper carefully from her, replaced it, turned away and walked out, holding the watch in his hand. I saw him pass the window a moment after with that foolish white hat on his head ; he couldn't have been thinking what he was about when he put it on. So the schoolmistress and I were left alone. I drew my chair a shade nearer to her, and continued.]

And since I am talking of early recollections, I don't know why I shouldn't mention some others that still cling to me, not that you will attach any very particular meaning to these same images, so full of significance to me, but that you will find something parallel to them in your own memory. You remember, perhaps, what I said one day about smells. There were certain *sounds* also which had a mysterious suggestiveness to me,—not so intense, perhaps, as that connected with the other sense, but yet peculiar, and never to be forgotten.

The first was the creaking of the wood-sleds, bringing their loads of oak and walnut from the country, as the slow-swinging oxen trailed them along over the complaining snow, in the cold, brown light of early morning. Lying in bed and listening to their dreary music had a pleasure in it akin to the Lucretian luxury, or that which Byron speaks of as to be enjoyed in looking *on at a battle* by one "who hath no friend, no brother there."

There was another sound, in itself so sweet, and so connected with one of those simple and curious superstitions of childhood of which I have spoken, that I can never cease to cherish a sad sort of love for it.—Let me tell the superstitious fancy first. The Puritan “Sabbath,” as everybody knows, began at “sundown” on Saturday evening. To such observance of it I was born and bred. As the large, round disk of day declined, a stillness, a solemnity, a somewhat melancholy hush came over us all. It was time for work to cease, and for playthings to be put away. The world of active life passed into the shadow of an eclipse, not to emerge until the sun should sink again beneath the horizon.

It was in this stillness of the world without and of the soul within that the pulsating lullaby of the evening crickets used to make itself most distinctly heard,—so that I well remember I used to think that the purring of these little creatures, which mingled with the batrachian hymns from the neighbouring swamp, *was peculiar to Saturday evenings*. I don’t know that any thing could give a clearer idea of the quieting and subduing effect of the old habit of observance of what was considered holy time, than this strange, childish fancy.

Yes, and there was still another sound which mingled its solemn cadences with the waking and sleeping dreams of my boyhood. It was heard only at times,—a deep, muffled roar, which rose and fell, not loud, but vast,—a whistling boy would have drowned it for his next neighbour, but it must have been heard over the space of a hundred square miles. I used to wonder what this might be. Could it be the roar of the thousand wheels and the ten thousand footsteps jarring and trampling along the stones of the neighbouring city? That would be continuous; but this, as I have said, rose and fell in regular rhythm. I remember being told, and I suppose this to have been the true solution, that it was the sound of the waves, after a high wind, breaking on the long beaches many miles distant. I should really like to know whether any observing people living ten miles, more or less, inland from long beaches,—in such a town, for instance, as Cantabridge, in the eastern part of the Territory of the Massachusetts,—have ever observed any such sound, and whether it was rightly accounted for as above.

Mingling with these inarticulate sounds in the low murmur of memory are the echoes of certain voices I have heard at rare intervals. I grieve to say it, but our people, I think, have not generally agreeable voices. The marrowy organisms, with skins that shed water like the backs of ducks, with smooth surfaces neatly padded beneath, and velvet linings to their singing-pipes, are not so common among us as that other pattern of humanity with angular outlines and plane surfaces, arid integuments, hair like the fibrous covering of a cocoa-nut in gloss and suppleness as well as colour, and voices at once thin and strenuous, acidulous enough to produce effervescence with alkalis, and stridulous

enough to sing duets with the katydids. I think our conversational soprano, as sometimes overheard in the cars, arising from a group of young persons, who may have taken the train at one of our great industrial centres, for instance,—young persons of the female sex, we will say, who have hustled in full-dressed, engaged in loud strident speech, and who, after free discussion, have fixed on two or more double seats, which having secured, they proceed to eat apples and hand round daguerrotypes,—I say, I think the conversational soprano, heard under these circumstances, would not be among the allurements the old Enemy would put in requisition, were he getting up a new temptation of St. Anthony.

There are sweet voices among us, we all know, and voices not musical, it may be, to those who hear them for the first time, yet sweeter to us than any we shall hear until we listen to some warbling angel in the overture to that eternity of blissful harmonies we hope to enjoy.—But why should I tell lies? If my friends love me, it is because I try to tell the truth. I never heard but two voices in my life that frightened me by their sweetness.—

Frightened you?—said the schoolmistress.—Yes, frightened me. They made me feel as if there might be constituted a creature with such a chord in her voice to some string in another's soul, that, if she but spoke, he would leave all and follow her, though it were into the jaws of Erebus. Our only chance to keep our wits is, that there are so few natural chords between others' voices and this string in our souls, and that those which at first may have jarred a little by and by come into harmony with it.—But I tell you this is no fiction. You may call the story of Ulysses and the Sirens a fable, but what will you say to Mario and the poor lady who followed him?

Whose were those two voices that bewitched me so?—They both belonged to German women. One was a chamber-maid, not otherwise fascinating. The key of my room at a certain great hotel was missing, and this Teutonic maiden was summoned to give information respecting it. The simple soul was evidently not long from her mother-land, and spoke with sweet uncertainty of dialect. But to hear her wonder and lament and suggest, with soft, liquid inflections, and low, sad murmurs, in tones as full of serious tenderness for the fate of the lost key as if it had been a child that had strayed from its mother, was so winning, that, had her features and figure been as delicious as her accents,—if she had looked like the marble Clytie, for instance,—why, all I can say is—

[The schoolmistress opened her eyes so wide, that I stopped short.]

I was only going to say that I should have drowned myself. For Lake Erie was close by, and it is so much better to accept asphyxia, which takes only three minutes by the watch, than a *mésalliance*, that lasts fifty years to begin with, and then passes

along down the line of descent (breaking out in all manner of boorish manifestations of feature and manner, which, if men were only as short-lived as horses, could be readily traced back through the square-roots and the cube-roots of the family stem on which you have hung the armorial bearings of the De Champignons or the De la Morues, until one come to beings that ate with knives and said, "Haow?"), that no person of right feeling could have hesitated for a single moment.

The second of the ravishing voices I have heard was, as I have said, that of another German woman.—I suppose I shall ruin myself by saying that such a voice could not have come from any Americanized human being.—

What was there in it?—said the schoolmistress,—and, upon my word, her tones were so very musical, that I almost wished I had said three voices instead of two, and not made the unpatriotic remark above reported.—Oh, I said, it is so much *woman* in it,—*muliebrity*, as well as *femininity*; no self-assertion, such as free suffrage introduces into every word and movement; large, vigorous nature, running back to those huge-limbed Germans of Tacitus but subdued by the reverential training and tuned by the kindly culture of fifty generations. Sharp business habits, a lean soil, independence, enterprise, and east winds, are not the best things for the larynx. Still, you hear noble voices among us,—I have known families famous for them,—but ask the first person you meet a question, and ten to one there is a hard, sharp, metallic, matter-of-business clink in the accents of the answer, that produces the effect of one of those bells which small tradespeople connect with their shop-doors, and which spring upon your ear with such vivacity, as you enter, that your first impulse is to retire at once from the precincts.—

Ah, but I must not forget that dear little child I saw and heard in a French hospital. Between two and three years old. Fell out of her chair and snapped both thigh bones. Lying in bed, patient, gentle. Rough students round her, some in white aprons, looking fearfully business-like; but the child placid, perfectly still. I spoke to her, and the blessed little creature answered me in a voice of such heavenly sweetness, with that reedy thrill in it which you have heard in the thrush's even-song, that I hear it at this moment, while I am writing, so many, many years afterwards.—*C'est tout comme un serin*, said the French student at my side.

These are the voices which struck the key-note of my conceptions as to what the sounds we are to hear in heaven will be, if we shall enter through one of the twelve gates of pearl. There must be other things besides aërolites that wander from their own spheres to ours; and when we speak of celestial sweetness or beauty, we may be nearer the literal truth than we dream. If mankind generally are the shipwrecked survivors of some pre-Adamatic cataclysm, set adrift in these little open boats of

humanity to make one more trial to reach the shore,—as some grave theologians have maintained,—if, in plain English, men are ghosts of dead devils who have “died into life” (to borrow an expression from Keats), and walk the earth in a suit of living rags which lasts three or four score summers,—why, there must have been a few good spirits sent to keep them company, and these sweet voices I speak of must belong to them.—

I wish you could once hear my sister's voice,—said the schoolmistress.

If it is like yours, it must be a pleasant one,—I said.

I never thought mine was anything,—said the schoolmistress.

How should you know?—said I.—People never hear their own voices,—any more than they see their own faces. There is not even a looking-glass for the voice. Of course there is something audible to us when we speak; but that something is not our own voice as it is known to all our acquaintances. I think, if an image spoke to us in our own tones, we should not know them in the least. How pleasant it would be if in another state of being we could have shapes like our own former selves for playthings,—we standing outside or inside of them, as we liked, and we being just what we used to be to others!

I wonder if there will be nothing like what we call “play,” after our earthly toys are broken, said the schoolmistress.

Hush, said I, what will the divinity-student say?

[I thought she was hit that time; but the shot must have gone over her, or on one side of her; she did not flinch.]

Oh, said the schoolmistress, he must look out for my sister's heresies: I am afraid he will be too busy with them to take care of mine.

Do you mean to say, said I, that it is *your sister* whom that student—

[The young fellow commonly known as John, who had been sitting on the barrel, smoking, jumped off just then, kicked over the barrel, gave it a push with his foot that set it rolling, and stuck his saucy-looking face in at the window so as to cut my question off in the middle; and the schoolmistress leaving the room a few minutes afterwards, I did not have a chance to finish it.

The young fellow came in and sat down in a chair, putting his heels on the top of another.

Pooty girl, said he.

A fine young lady, I replied.

Keeps a fust-rate school, according to accounts, said he; teaches all sorts of things—Latin and Italian and music. Folks rich once—smashed up. She went right ahead as smart as if she had been born to work. That's the kind o' girl I go for. I'd marry her, only two or three other girls would drown themselves if I did.

I think the above is the longest speech of this young fellow's

which I have put on record. I do not like to change his peculiar expressions, for this is one of those cases in which the style is the man, as M. de Buffon says. The fact is, the young fellow is a good-hearted creature enough, only too fond of his jokes—and if it were not for those heat-lightning winks on one side of his face, I should not mind his fun much.]

[Some days after this, when the company were together again, I talked a little.]—

I don't think I have a genuine hatred for any body. I am well aware that I differ herein from the sturdy English moralist and the stout American tragedian. I don't deny that I hate *the sight* of certain people; but the qualities which make me tend to hate the man himself are such as I am so much disposed to pity, that, except under immediate aggravation, I feel kindly enough to the worst of them. It is such a sad thing to be born a sneaking fellow, so much worse than to inherit a hump-back or a couple of club-feet, that I sometimes feel as if we ought to love the crippled souls, if I may use this expression, with a certain tenderness which we need not waste on noble natures. One who is born with such congenital incapacity that nothing can make a gentleman of him is entitled, not to our wrath, but to our profoundest sympathy. But as we cannot help hating the sight of these people, just as we do that of physical deformities, we gradually eliminate them from our society,—we love them, but open the window and let them go. By the time decent people reach middle age, they have weeded their circle pretty well of these unfortunates, unless they have a taste for such animals; in which case, no matter what their position may be, there is something, you may be sure, in their nature akin to that of their wretched parasites.

The divinity-student wished to know what I thought of affinities, as well as of antipathies; did I believe in love at first sight?

Sir, said I, all men love all women. That is the *prima-facie* aspect of the case. The Court of Nature assumes the law to be, that all men do so; and the individual man is bound to show cause why he does not love any particular woman. A man, says one of my old black-letter law books, may show divers good reasons, as thus: He hath not seen the person named in the indictment; she is of tender age, or the reverse of that; she hath certain personal disqualifications—as, for instance, she is a blackamoor, or hath an ill-favoured countenance; or, his capacity of loving being limited, his affections are engrossed by a previous comer; and so of other conditions. Not the less is it true that he is bound by duty and inclined by nature to love each and every woman. Therefore it is that each woman virtually summons every man to show cause why he doth not love her. This is not by written document, or direct speech,



for the most part, but by certain signs of silk, gold, and other materials, which say to all men—Look on me and love, as in duty bound. Then the man pleadeth his special incapacity, whatsoever that may be—as, for instance, impecuniosity, or that he hath one or many wives in his household, or that he is of mean figure, or small capacity, of which reasons it may be noted that the first is, according to late decisions, of chiefest authority. So far the old law-book. But there is a note from an older authority, saying that every woman doth also love each and every man, except there be some good reason to the contrary; and a very observant friend of mine, a young unmarried clergyman, tells me that, so far as his experience goes, he has reason to think the ancient author had fact to justify his statement.

I'll tell you how it is with the pictures of women we fall in love with at first sight.

We ain't talking about pictures, said the landlady's daughter, we're talking about women.

I understood that we were speaking of love at first sight, I remarked mildly. Now, as all a man knows about a woman whom he looks at is just what a picture as big as a copper, or a "nickel," rather at the bottom of his eye can teach him, I think I am right in saying we are talking about the pictures of women. Well, now, the reason why a man is not desperately in love with ten thousand women at once is just that which prevents all our portraits being distinctly seen upon that wall. They all *are* painted there by reflection from our faces, but because *all* of them are painted on each spot, and each on the same surface, and many other objects at the same time, no one is seen as a picture. But darken a chamber and let a single pencil of rays in through a keyhole, then you have a picture on the wall. We never fall in love with a woman in distinction from women, until we can get an image of her through a pin-hole; and then we can see nothing else, and nobody but ourselves can see the image in our mental camera-obscura.

My friend the Poet tells me he has to leave town whenever the anniversaries come round.

What's the difficulty? Why, they all want him to get up and make speeches, or songs, or toasts; which is just the very thing he doesn't want to do. He is an old story, he says, and hates to show on these occasions. But they tease him, and coax him, and can't do without him, and feel all over his poor weak head, until they get their fingers on the *fontanelle* (the Professor will tell you what this means—he says the one at the top of the head always remains open in poets), until by gentle pressure on that soft pulsating spot, they stupefy him to the point of acquiescence.

There are times, though, he says, when it is a pleasure, before going to some agreeable meeting, to rush out into one's garden

and clutch up a handful of what grows there—weeds and violets together—not cutting them off, but pulling them up by the roots with the brown earth they grow in sticking to them. That's his idea of a postprandial performance. Look here, now. These verses I am going to read you, he tells me, were pulled up by the roots just in that way, the other day. Beautiful entertainment—names there on the plates that flow from all English-speaking tongues as familiarly as *and* or *the*; entertainers known wherever good poetry and fair title-pages are held in esteem; guest a kind-hearted, modest, genial, hopeful poet, who sings to the hearts of his countrymen, the British people, the songs of good cheer which the better days to come, as all honest souls trust and believe, will turn into the prose of common life. My friend the poet says you must not read such a string of verses too literally. If he trimmed it nicely below, you wouldn't see the roots, he says, and he likes to keep them, and a little of the soil clinging to them.

This is the farewell of my friend the Poet, read to his and our friend the Poet :

#### A GOOD TIME GOING !

Brave singer of the coming time,  
Sweet minstrel of the joyous present,  
Crowned with the noblest wreath of rhyme,  
The holly-leaf of Ayrshire's peasant,  
Good by ! Good by !—Our hearts and hands,  
Our lips in honest Saxon phrases,  
Cry, God be with him, till he stands  
His feet among the English daisies !

'Tis here we part ;—for other eyes  
The busy deck, the fluttering streamer  
The dripping arms that plunge and rise,  
The waves in foam, the ship in tremor,  
The kerchiefs waving from the pier,  
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,  
The deep blue desert, lone and drear,  
With heaven above and home before him !

His home !—the Western giant smiles,  
And twirls the spotty globe to find it ;—  
This little speck the British Isles ?  
'Tis but a freckle—never mind it !—  
He laughs, and all his prairies roll,  
Each gurgling cataract roars and chuckles,  
And ridges stretched from pole to pole  
Heave till they crack their iron knuckles !

But memory blushes at the sneer,  
And Honour turns with frown defiant;  
And Freedom, leaning on her spear,  
Laughs louder than the laughing giant :—  
"An islet is a world," she said,  
"When glory with its dust has blended,  
And Britain keeps her noble dead  
Till earth and seas and skies are rended !"

Beneath each swinging forest-bough  
 Some arm as stout in death reposes,—  
 From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow  
 Her valour's life-blood runs in roses ;  
 Nay, let our brothers of the West  
 Write smiling in their florid pages,  
 One-half her soil has walked the rest  
 In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages !  
 Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,  
 From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,  
 The British oak with rooted grasp  
 Her slender handful holds together ;—  
 With cliffs of white and bowers of green,  
 And Ocean narrowing to caress her,  
 And hills and threaded streams between,—  
 Our little mother isle, God bless her !  
 In earth's broad temple where we stand,  
 Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,  
 We hold the missal in our hand,  
 Bright with the lines our Mother taught us ;  
 Where'er its blazoned page betrays  
 The glistening links of gilded fetters,  
 Behold, the half-turned leaf displays  
 Her rubric stained in crimson letters !  
 Enough ! To speed a parting friend  
 'Tis vain alike to speak and listen ;—  
 Yet stay—these feeble accents blend  
 With rays of light from eyes that glisten.  
 Good by ! once more—and kindly tell  
 In words of peace the young world's story—  
 And say, besides—we love too well  
 Our mother's soil, our father's glory

When my friend the Professor found that my friend the Poet had been coming out in this full-blown style, he got a little excited, as you may have seen a canary, sometimes, when another strikes up. The Professor says he knows he can lecture, and thinks he can write verses. At any rate, he has often tried, and now he was determined to try again. So when some professional friends of his called him up, one day, after a feast of reason and a regular "fresket" of soul which had lasted two or three hours, he read them these verses. He introduced them with a few remarks, he told me, of which the only one he remembered was this : that he had rather write a single line which one among them should think worth remembering, than set them all laughing with a string of epigrams. It was all right, I don't doubt ; at any rate, that was his fancy then, and perhaps another time he may be obstinately hilarious ; however, it may be that he is growing graver, for time is a fact so long as clocks and watches continue to go, and a cat can't be a kitten always, as the old gentleman opposite said the other day.

You must listen to this seriously, for I think the Professor was very much in earnest when he wrote it.

## THE TWO ARMIES.

As Life's unending column pours,  
Two marshalled hosts are seen,—  
Two armies on the trampled shores  
That Death flows back between.

One marches to the drum-beat's roll,  
The wide-mouthed clarion's bray,  
And bears upon a crimson scroll,  
"Our glory is to slay!"

One moves in silence by the stream,  
With sad, yet watchful eyes,  
Calm as the patient planet's gleam  
That walks the clouded skies.

Along its front no sabres shine,  
No blood-red pennons wave;  
Its banners bear the single line,  
"Our duty is to save."

For those no death-bed's lingering shade;  
At Honour's trumpet-call  
With knitted brow and lifted blade  
In Glory's arms they fall.

For these no clashing falchions bright,  
No stirring battle-cry;  
The bloodless stabber calls by night—  
Each answers, "Here am I!"

For those the sculptor's laurelled bust,  
The builder's marble piles,  
The anthems pealing o'er their dust  
Through long cathedral aisles.

For these the blossom-sprinkled turf  
That floods the lonely graves,  
When Spring rolls in her sea-green surf  
In flowery-foaming waves.

Two paths lead upward from below,  
And angels wait above,  
Who count each burning life-drop's flow,  
Each falling tear of Love.

Though from the Hero's bleeding breast  
Her pulses Freedom drew,  
Though the white lilies in her crest  
Sprang from that scarlet dew,—

While Valour's haughty champions wait  
Till all their scars are shown,  
Love walks unchallenged through the gate.  
To sit beside the Throne!

## X.

[THE schoolmistress came down with a rose in her hair—a fresh June rose. She has been walking early; she has brought back two others, one on each cheek.

I told her so, in some such pretty phrase as I could muster for the occasion. Those two blush-roses I just spoke of turned into

a couple of damasks. I suppose all this went through my mind, for this was what I went on to say :—]

I love the damask-rose best of all. The flowers our mothers and sisters used to love and cherish, those which grow beneath our eaves and by our doorsteps, are the ones we always love best. If the Houyhnhnms should ever catch me, and, finding me particularly vicious and unmanageable, send a man-tamer to Rarefyfy me, I'll tell you what drugs he would have to take and how he would have to use them. Imagine yourself reading a number of the *Houyhnhnm Gazette*, giving an account of such an experiment.

“MAN-TAMING EXTRAORDINARY.

“The soft-hoofed semi-quadruped recently captured was subjected to the art of our distinguished man-tamer in presence of a numerous assembly. The animal was led in by two stout ponies, closely confined by straps to prevent his sudden and dangerous tricks of shoulder-hitting and foot-striking. His countenance expressed the utmost degree of ferocity and cunning.

“The operator took a handful of *budding lilac-leaves*, and crushing them slightly between his hoofs, so as to bring out their peculiar fragrance, fastened them to the end of a long pole and held them towards the creature. Its expression changed in an instant—it drew in their fragrance eagerly, and attempted to seize them with its soft split hoofs. Having thus quieted his suspicious subject, the operator proceeded to tie a *blue hyacinth* to the end of the pole and held it out towards the wild animal. The effect was magical. Its eyes filled as if with rain-drops, and its lips trembled as it pressed them to the flower. After this it was perfectly quiet, and brought a measure of corn to the man-tamer, without showing the least disposition to strike with the feet or hit from the shoulder.”

That will do for the *Houyhnhnm Gazette*.—Do you ever wonder why poets talk so much about flowers? Did you ever hear of a poet who did not talk about them? Don't you think a poem which, for the sake of being original, should leave them out, would be like those verses where the letter *a* or *e* or some other is omitted? No—they will bloom over and over again in poems as in the summer fields, to the end of time, always old and always new. Why should we be more shy of repeating ourselves than the spring be tired of blossoms, or the night of stars? Look at Nature. She never wearies of saying over her floral Pater-noster. In the crevices of Cyclopean walls—in the dust where men lie, dust also—on the mounds that bury huge cities, the wreck of Nineveh and the Babel-heap—still that same sweet prayer and benediction. The Amen! of Nature is always a flower.

Are you tired of my trivial personalities—those splashes and

streaks of sentiment, sometimes perhaps of sentimentality, which you may see when I show you my heart's corolla as if it were a tulip? Pray, do not give yourself the trouble to fancy me an idiot whose conceit it is to treat himself as an exceptional being. It is because you are just like me that I talk and know that you will listen. We are all splashed and streaked with sentiments—not with precisely the same tints, or in exactly the same patterns, but by the same hand and from the same palette.

I don't believe any of you happen to have just the same passion for the blue hyacinth which I have—very certainly not for the crushed lilac-leaf-buds; many of you do not know how sweet they are. You love the smell of the sweet-fern and the bayberry-leaves, I don't doubt; but I hardly think that the last bewitches you with young memories as it does me. For the same reason I come back to damask-roses, after having raised a good many of the rarer varieties. I like to go to operas and concerts, but there are queer little old homely sounds that are better than music to me. However, I suppose it's foolish to tell such things.—

It is pleasant to be foolish at the right time—said the divinity-student; saying it, however, in one of the dead languages, which I think are unpopular for summer-reading, and therefore do not bear quotation as such.

Well, now—said I—suppose a good, clean, wholesome-looking countryman's cart stops opposite my door.—Do I want any huckleberries?—If I do not, there are those that do. Thereupon my soft-voiced handmaid bears out a large tin-pan, and then the wholesome countryman, heaping the peck-measure, spreads his broad hands around its lower arc to confine the wild and frisky berries, and so they run nimbly along the narrowing channel until they tumble rustling down in a black cascade and tinkle on the resounding metal beneath.—I won't say that this rushing huckleberry hail-storm has not more music for me than the “Anvil Chorus.”—

I wonder how my great trees are coming on this summer?

Where are your great trees, sir?—said the divinity-student.

Oh, all round about New England. I call all trees mine that I have put my wedding-ring on; and I have as many tree-wives as Brigham-Young has human ones.—

One set's as green as the other—exclaimed a boarder, who has never been identified.

They're all Bloomers—said the young fellow called John.

[I should have rebuked this trifling with language, if our landlady's daughter had not asked me just then what I meant by putting my wedding-ring on a tree.]

Why, measuring it with my thirty-foot tape, my dear—said I—I have worn a tape almost out on the rough barks of our old New-England elms and other big trees.—Don't you want to hear me talk trees a little now? That is one of my specialities.

[So they all agreed that they should like to hear me talk about trees.]

I want you to understand, in the first place, that I have a most intense, passionate fondness for trees in general, and have had several romantic attachments to certain trees in particular. Now, if you expect me to hold forth in a "scientific" way about my tree-loves—to talk, for instance, of the *Ulmus Americana*, and describe the ciliated edges of its samara, and all that—you are an anserine individual, and I must refer you to a dull friend who will discourse to you of such matters. What should you think of a lover who should describe the idol of his heart in the language of science, thus : Class, Mammalia ; Order, Primates ; Genus, Homo ; Species, Europeus ; Variety, Brown ; Individual, Ann Eliza ; Dental Formula,

$$i \frac{2-2}{2-2} c \frac{1-1}{1-1} p \frac{2-2}{2-2} m \frac{3-3}{3-3},$$

and so on?

No, my friends ; I shall speak of trees as we see them, love them, adore them in the fields, where they are alive, holding their green sun-shades over our heads, talking to us with their hundred thousand whispering tongues, looking down on us with that sweet meekness which belongs to huge, but limited organisms—which one sees in the brown eyes of oxen, but most in the patient posture, the outstretched arms, and the heavy-drooping robes of these vast beings endowed with life, but not with soul—which outgrow us and outlive us, but stand helpless—poor things !—while nature dresses and undresses them, like so many full-sized, but under-witted children.

Did you ever read old Daddy Gilpin ? Slowest of men, even of English men ; yet delicious in his slowness, as is the light of a sleepy eye in woman. I always supposed *Dr. Syntax* was written to make fun of him. I have a whole set of his works, and am very proud of it, with its grey paper, and open type, and long ff, and orange-juice landscapes. The *Père Gilpin* had the kind of science I like in the study of Nature—a little less observation than White of Selborne, but a little more poetry.—Just think of applying the Linnæan system to an elm ! Who cares how many stamens or pistils that little brown flower, which comes out before the leaf, may have to classify it by ? What we want is the meaning, the character, the expression of a tree, as a kind and as an individual.

There is a mother-idea in each particular kind of tree, which, if well marked, is probably embodied in the poetry of every language. Take the oak, for instance, and we find it always standing as a type of strength and endurance. I wonder if you ever thought of the single mark of supremacy which distinguishes this tree from all our other forest-trees ? All the rest of them shirk the work of resisting gravity ; the oak alone defies it. It chooses the horizontal direction for its limbs, so that their whole



weight may tell ; and then stretches them out fifty or sixty feet, so that the strain may be mighty enough to be worth resisting. You will find that, in passing from the extreme downward droop of the branches of the weeping willow to the extreme upward inclination of those of the poplar, they sweep nearly half a circle. At  $90^{\circ}$  the oak stops short ; to slant upward another degree would mark infirmity of purpose ; to bend downwards, weakness of organisation. The American elm betrays something of both ; yet sometimes, as we shall see, puts on a certain resemblance to its sturdier neighbour.

It won't do to be exclusive in our taste about trees. There is hardly one of them which has not peculiar beauties in some fitting place for it. I remember a tall poplar of monumental proportions and aspect—a vast pillar of glossy green, placed on the summit of a lofty hill, and a beacon to all the country round. A native of that region saw fit to build his house very near it, and, having a fancy that it might blow down some time or other, and exterminate himself and any incidental relatives who might be “stopping” or “tarrying” with him—also labouring under the delusion that human life is under all circumstances to be preferred to vegetable existence—had the great poplar cut down. It is so easy to say, “It is only a poplar !” and so much harder to replace its living cone than to build a granite obelisk !

I must tell you about some of my tree-wives. I was at one period of my life much devoted to the young-lady population of Rhode Island, a small but delightful State in the neighbourhood of Pawtucket. The number of inhabitants being not very large, I had leisure, during my visits to the Providence Plantations, to inspect the face of the country in the intervals of more fascinating studies of physiognomy. I heard some talk of a great elm a short distance from the locality just mentioned. “Let us see the great elm,”—I said, and proceeded to find it—knowing that it was on a certain farm in a place called Johnston, if I remember rightly. I shall never forget my ride and my introduction to the great Johnston elm.

I always tremble for a celebrated tree when I approach it for the first time. Provincialism has no *scale* of excellence in man or vegetable ; it never knows a first-rate article of either kind when it has it, and is constantly taking second and third-rate ones for Nature's best. I have often fancied the tree was afraid of me, and that a sort of shiver came over it as over a betrothed maiden when she first stands before the unknown to whom she has been plighted. Before the measuring-tape the proudest tree of them all quails and shrinks into itself. All those stories of four or five men stretching their arms around it and not touching each other's fingers, of one's pacing the shadow at noon and making it so many hundred feet, die upon its leafy lips in the presence of the awful ribbon which has strangled so many false pretensions.

As I rode along the pleasant way, watching eagerly for the object of my journey, the rounded tops of the elms arose from time to time at the roadside. Wherever one looked taller and fuller than the rest, I asked myself,—“Is this it?” But as I drew nearer they grew smaller,—or it proved, perhaps, that two standing in a line had looked like one, and so deceived me. At last, all at once, when I was not thinking of it,—I declare to you it makes my flesh creep when I think of it now,—all at once I saw a great green cloud swelling in the horizon, so vast, so symmetrical, of such Olympian majesty and imperial supremacy among the lesser forest growths, that my heart stopped short, then jumped at my ribs as a hunter springs at a five-barred gate, and I felt all through me, without need of uttering the words,—“This is it!”

You will find this tree described, with many others, in the excellent *Report upon the Trees and Shrubs of Massachusetts*. The author has given my friend the Professor credit for some of his measurements, but measured this tree himself, carefully. It is a grand elm for size of trunk, spread of limbs, and muscular development,—one of the first, perhaps the first, of the first-class of New-England elms.

The largest actual girth I have ever found five feet from the ground is in the great elm lying a stone's throw or two north of the main road (if my points of compass are right) in Springfield. But this has much the appearance of having been formed by the union of two trunks growing side by side.

The West-Springfield elm and one upon Northampton meadows belong also to the first class of trees.

There is a noble old wreck of an elm at Hatfield, which used to spread its claws out over a circumference of thirty-five feet or more before they covered the foot of its bole up with earth. This is the American elm most like an oak of any I have ever seen.

The Sheffield elm is equally remarkable for size and perfection of form. I have seen nothing that comes near it in Berkshire County, and few to compare with it anywhere. I am not sure that I remember any other first-class elms in New England, but there may be many.—

What makes a first-class elm? Why, size in the first place, and chiefly. Anything over twenty feet of clear girth, five feet above the ground, and with a spread of branches a hundred feet across, may claim that title, according to my scale. All of them, with the questionable exception of the Springfield tree above referred to, stop, so far as my experience goes, at about twenty-two or twenty-three feet of girth and a hundred and twenty of spread.

Elms of the second class, generally ranging from fourteen to eighteen feet, are comparatively common. The queen of them all is that glorious tree near one of the churches in Springfield.

Beautiful and stately she is beyond all praise. The "great tree" on Boston Common comes in the second rank, as does the one at Cohasset, which used to have, and probably has still, a head as round as an apple-tree, and that at Newbury-port, with scores of others which might be mentioned. These last two have perhaps been over-celebrated. Both, however, are pleasing vegetables. The poor old Pittsfield elm lives on its past reputation. A wig of false leaves is indispensable to make it presentable.

[I don't doubt there may be some monster-elm or other, vegetating green, but inglorious, in some remote New-England village, which only wants a sacred singer to make it celebrated. Send us your measurements (certified by the postmaster, to avoid possible imposition)—circumference five feet from soil, length of line from bough-end to bough-end, and we will see what can be done for you.]—

I wish somebody would get us up the following work:

#### SYLVA NOVANGLICA.

Photographs of New-England Elms and other Trees, taken upon the Same Scale of Magnitude. With Letter-Press Descriptions, by a Distinguished Literary Gentleman. Boston: ——— & Co. 185 . .

The same camera should be used,—so far as possible,—at a fixed distance. Our friend, who has given us so many interesting figures in his *Trees of America*, must not think this Prospectus invades his province; a dozen portraits, with lively descriptions, would be a pretty complement to his larger work, which, so far as published, I find excellent. If my plan were carried out, and another series of a dozen English trees photographed on the same scale, the comparison would be charming.

It has always been a favourite idea of mine to bring the life of the Old and New World face to face, by an accurate comparison of their various types of organisation. We should begin with man, of course; institute a large and exact comparison between the development of *la pianta umana*, as Alfieri called it, in different sections of each country, in the different callings, at different ages, estimating height, weight, force by the dynamometer and the spirometer, and finishing off with a series of typical photographs, giving the principal national physiognomies. Mr. Hutchinson has given us some excellent English data to begin with.

Then I would follow this up by contrasting the various parallel forms of life in the two continents. Our naturalists have often referred to this incidentally or expressly; but the *animus* of Nature in the two half-globes of the planet is so momentous a point of interest to our race, that it should be made a subject of express and elaborate study. Go out with me into that walk

which we call *the Mall*, and look at the English and American elms. The American elm is tall, graceful, slender-sprayed, and drooping as if from languor. The English elm is compact, robust, holds its branches up, and carries its leaves for weeks longer than our own native tree.

Is this typical of the creative force on the two sides of the ocean, or not? Nothing but a careful comparison through the whole realm of life can answer this question.

There is a parallelism without identity in the animal and vegetable life of the two continents, which favours the task of comparison in an extraordinary manner. Just as we have two trees alike in many ways, yet not the same—both elms, yet easily distinguishable—just so we have a complete flora and a fauna, which, parting from the same ideal, embody it with various modifications. Inventive power is the only quality of which the Creative Intelligence seems to be economical; just as with our largest human minds, that is the divinest of faculties, and the one that most exhausts the mind which exercises it. As the same patterns have very commonly been followed, we can see which is worked out in the largest spirit, and determine the exact limitations under which the Creator places the movement of life in all its manifestations in either locality. We should find ourselves in a very false position, if it should prove that Anglo-Saxons can't live here, but die out, if not kept up by fresh supplies, as Dr. Knox and other more or less wise persons have maintained. It may turn out the other way, as I have heard one of our literary celebrities argue,—and though I took the other side, I liked his best,—that the American is the Englishman reinforced.—

Will you walk out and look at those elms with me after breakfast?—I said to the schoolmistress.

[I am not going to tell lies about it, and say that she blushed, as I suppose she ought to have done, at such a tremendous piece of gallantry as that was for our boarding-house. On the contrary, she turned a little pale,—but smiled brightly and said,—Yes, with pleasure, but she must walk towards her school.—She went for her bonnet. The old gentleman opposite followed her with his eyes, and said he wished he was a young fellow. Presently she came down, looking very pretty in her half-mourning bonnet, and carrying a school-book in her hand.]

#### MY FIRST WALK WITH THE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

This is the shortest way,—she said, as we came to a corner.—Then we won't take it,—said I.—The schoolmistress laughed a little, and said she was ten minutes early, so she could go round.

We walked under Mr. Paddock's row of English elms. The gray squirrels were out looking for their breakfasts, and one of them came towards us in light, soft, intermittent leaps, until he

was close to the rail of the burial-ground. He was on a grave with a broad blue slate stone at its head, and a shrub growing on it. The stone said this was the grave of a young man who was the son of an honourable gentleman, and who died a hundred years ago and more. Oh, yes, *died* with a small triangular mark in one breast, and another smaller, opposite in his back, where another young man's rapier had slid through his body; so he lay down out there on the common, and was found cold the next morning, with the night-dews and the death-dews mingled on his forehead.

Let us have one look at poor Benjamin's grave,—said I.—His bones lie where his body was laid so long ago, and where the stones say they lie,—which is more than can be said of most of the tenants of this and several other burial-grounds.

[The most accursed act of Vandalism ever committed within my knowledge was the uprooting of the ancient grave-stones in three at least of our city burial-grounds, and one at least just outside the city, and planting them in rows to suit the taste for symmetry of the perpetrators. Many years ago, when this disgraceful process was going on under my eyes, I addressed an indignant remonstrance to a leading journal. I suppose it was deficient in literary elegance, or too warm in its language; for no notice was taken of it, and the hyena-horror was allowed to complete itself in the face of daylight. I have never got over it. The bones of my own ancestors being entombed, lie beneath their own tablet; but the upright stones have been shuffled about like chessmen, and nothing short of the Day of Judgment will tell whose dust lies beneath any of those records, meant by affection to mark one small spot as sacred to some cherished memory. Shame! shame! shame!—that is all I can say. It was on public thoroughfares, under the eye of authority, that this infamy was enacted. The Red Indians would have known better; the select men of an African kraal-village would have had more respect for their ancestors. I should like to see the gravestones which have been disturbed all removed, and the ground levelled, leaving the flat tombstones; epitaphs were never famous for truth, but the old reproach of "*Here lies*" never had such a wholesale illustration as in these outraged burial-places, where the stone does lie above, and the bones do not lie beneath.]

Stop before we turn away, and breathe a woman's sigh over poor Benjamin's dust. Love killed him, I think. Twenty years old, and out there fighting another young fellow on the Common, in the cool of that old July evening—yes, there must have been love at the bottom of it.

The schoolmistress dropped a rose-bud she had in her hand, through the rails, upon the grave of Benjamin Woodbridge. That was<sup>t</sup> all her comment upon what I told her. How women love Love! said I; but she did not speak.

We came opposite the head of a place or court running eastward from the main street.—Look down there, I said. My friend the Professor lived in that house at the left hand, next the farther corner, for years and years. He died out of it, the other day.—Died? said the schoolmistress.—Certainly, said I. We die out of houses, just as we die out of our bodies. A commercial smash kills a hundred men's houses for them, as a railroad crash kills their mortal frames and drives out the immortal tenants. Men sicken of houses until at last they quit them, as the soul leaves its body when it is tired of its infirmities. The body has been called "the house we live in;" the house is quite as much the body we live in. Shall I tell you some things the Professor said the other day?—Do! said the schoolmistress.

A man's body, said the Professor, is whatever is occupied by his will and his sensibility. The small room down there, where I wrote those papers you remember reading, was much more a portion of my body than a paralytic's senseless and motionless arm or leg is of his.

The soul of a man has a series of concentric envelopes round it, like the core of an onion, or the innermost of a nest of boxes. First, he has his natural garment of flesh and blood. Then his artificial integuments, with their true skin of solid stuffs, their cuticle of lighter tissues, and their variously tinted pigments. Thirdly, his domicile, be it a single chamber or a stately mansion. And then, the whole visible world, in which Time buttons him up as in a loose outside wrapper.

You shall observe, the Professor said—for, like Mr. John Hunter and other great men, he brings in that *shall* with great effect sometimes—you shall observe that a man's clothing or series of envelopes does after a certain time mould itself upon his individual nature. We know this of our hats, and are always reminded of it when we happen to put them on wrong side foremost. We soon find that the beaver is a hollow cast of the skull, with all its irregular bumps and depressions. Just so all that clothes a man, even to the blue sky which caps his head—a little loosely—shapes itself to fit each particular being beneath it. Farmers, sailors, astronomers, poets, lovers, condemned criminals, all find it different according to the eyes with which they severally look.

But our houses shape themselves palpably on our inner and outer natures. See a householder breaking up and you will be sure of it. There is a shell-fish which builds all manner of smaller shells into the walls of its own. A house is never a home until we have crusted it with the spoils of a hundred lives besides those of our own past. See what these are and you can tell what the occupant is.

I had no idea, said the Professor, until I pulled up my domestic establishment the other day, what an enormous quantity

of roots I had been making during the years I was planted there. Why, there wasn't a nook or a corner that some fibre had not worked its way into; and when I gave the last wrench, each seemed to shriek like a mandrake, as it broke its hold and came away.

There is nothing that happens, you know, which must not inevitably, and which does not actually, photograph itself in every conceivable aspect and in all dimensions. The infinite galleries of the Past await but one brief process, and all their pictures will be called out and fixed for ever. We had a curious illustration of the great fact on a very humble scale. When a certain bookcase, long standing in one place, for which it was built, was removed, there was the exact image on the wall of the whole, and of many of its portions. But in the midst of this picture was another—the precise outline of a map which had hung on the wall before the bookcase was built. We had all forgotten every thing about the map until we saw its photograph on the wall. Then we remembered it, as some day or other we may remember a sin which has been built over and covered up, when this lower universe is pulled away from before the wall of Infinity where the wrong-doing stands self-recorded.

The Professor lived in that house a long time,—not twenty years, but pretty near it. When he entered that door, two shadows glided over the threshold; five lingered in the doorway when he passed through it for the last time,—and one of the shadows was claimed by its owner to be longer than his own. What changes he saw in that quiet place! Death rained through every roof but his; children came into life, grew to maturity, wedded, faded away, threw themselves away; the whole drama of life was played in that stock-company's theatre of a dozen houses, one of which was his, and no deep sorrow or severe calamity ever entered his dwelling. Peace be to those walls, for ever,—the Professor said,—for the many pleasant years he has passed within them!

The Professor has a friend, now living at a distance, who has been with him in many of his changes of place, and who follows him in imagination with tender interest wherever he goes.—In that little court, where he lived in gay loneliness so long,—

in his autumnal sojourn by the Connecticut, where it comes loitering down from its mountain fastnesses, like a great lord, swallowing up the small proprietary rivulets very quietly as it goes, until it gets proud and swollen, and wantons in huge luxurious oxbows about the fair Northampton meadows, and at last overflows the oldest inhabitant's memory in profligate freshets at Hartford and all along its lower shores,—up in that caravansary on the banks of the stream where Ledyard launched his log canoe, and the jovial old Colonel used to lead the Commencement processions,—where blue Ascutney looked down



from the far distance, and the hills of Beulah, as the Professor always called them, rolled up the opposite horizon in soft climbing masses, so suggestive of the Pilgrim's Heavenward Path that he used to look through his old "Dollond" to see if the Shining Ones were not within range of sight,—sweet visions, sweetest in those Sunday walks which carry them by the peaceful common, through the solemn village lying in cataleptic stillness under the shadow of the rod of Moses, to the terminus of their harmless stroll,—the patulous fage, in the Professor's classic dialect,—the spreading beech, in more familiar phrase—[stop and breathe here a moment, for the sentence is not done yet, and we have another long journey before us],—

and again once more up among those other hills that shut in the amber-flowing Housatonic,—dark stream, but clear, like the lucid orbs that shine beneath the lids of auburn-haired, sherry-wine-eyed demi-blondes,—in the home over-looking the winding stream and the smooth, flat meadow; looked down upon by wild hills, where the tracks of bears and catamounts may yet sometimes be seen upon the winter snow; facing the twin summits which rise in the far North, the highest waves of the great land-storm in all this billowy region,—suggestive to mad fancies of the breasts of a half-buried Titaness, stretched out by a stray thunderbolt, and hastily hidden away beneath the leaves of the forest,—in that home where seven blessed summers were passed, which stand in memory like the seven golden candlesticks in the beatific vision of the holy dreamer,—

in that modest dwelling we were just looking at, not glorious, yet not unlovely in the youth of its drab and mahogany,—full of great and little boys' playthings from top to bottom,—in all these summer or winter nests he was always at home and always welcome.

This long-articulated sigh of reminiscences,—this calenture which shows me the maple-shadowed plains of Berkshire and the mountain-circled green of Grafton beneath the salt waves which come feeling their way along the wall at my feet, restless and soft-touching as blind men's busy fingers,—is for that friend of mine who looks into the waters of the Patapsco and sees beneath them the same visions which paint themselves for me in the green depths of the Charles.—

Did I talk all this off to the schoolmistress?—Why, no, of course not. I have been talking with you, the reader, for the last ten minutes. You don't think I should expect any woman to listen to such a sentence as that long one, without giving her a chance to put in a word?—

What did I say to the schoolmistress?—Permit me one moment. I don't doubt your delicacy and good breeding; but in this particular case, as I was allowed the privilege of walking alone with a very interesting young woman, you must allow me to remark, in the classic version of a familiar

phrase, used by our Master Benjamin Franklin, it is *nullum tui negotii*.

When the schoolmistress and I reached the school-room door, the damask-roses I spoke of were so much heightened in colour by exercise, that I felt sure it would be useful to her to take a stroll like this every morning, and made up my mind I would ask her to let me join her again.

EXTRACT FROM MY PRIVATE JOURNAL

(*To be burned unread.*)

I am afraid I have been a fool; for I have told as much of myself to this young person as if she were of that ripe and discreet age which invites confidence and expansive utterance. I have been low-spirited and listless, lately,—it is coffee, I think —(I observe that which is bought *ready-ground* never affects the head),—and I notice that I tell my secrets too easily when I am down-hearted.

There are inscriptions on our hearts, which, like that on Dighton Rock, are never to be seen except at dead-low tide.

There is a woman's footstep on the sand at the side of my deepest ocean-buried inscription!—

Oh, no, no, no! a thousand times, no!—Yet what is this which has been shaping itself in my soul?—Is it a thought?—is it a dream?—is it a *passion*?—Then I know what comes next.—

The Asylum stands on a bright and breezy hill; those glazed corridors are pleasant to walk in, in bad weather. But there are iron bars to all the windows. When it is fair, some of us can stroll outside that very high fence. But I never see much life in those groups I sometimes meet;—and then the careful man watches them so closely! How I remember that sad company I used to pass on fine mornings, when I was a schoolboy!—B., with his arms full of yellow weeds,—ore from the gold-mines which he discovered long before we heard of California,—Y., born to millions, crazed by too much plum-cake (the boys said), dogged, explosive,—made a Polyphemus of my weak-eyed schoolmaster, by a vicious flirt with a stick—(the multi-millionaires sent him a trifle, it was said, to buy another eye with; but boys are jealous of rich folks, and I don't doubt the good people made him easy for life)—how I remember them all!

I recollect, as all do, the story of the Hall of Eblis, in *Vathek*, and how each shape, as it lifted its hand from its breast, showed its heart,—a burning coal. The real Hall of Eblis stands on yonder summit. Go there on the next visiting-day, and ask that figure crouched in the corner, huddled up like those Indian mummies and skeletons found buried in the sitting posture, to lift its hand,—look upon its heart, and behold, not fire, but ashes.—No, I must not think of such an ending! Dying would be a much more gentlemanly way of meeting the difficulty.

Make a will and leave her a house or two and some stocks, and other little financial conveniences, to take away her necessity for keeping school.—I wonder what nice young man's feet would be in my French slippers before six months were over! Well, what then? If a man really loves a woman, of course he wouldn't marry her for the world, if he were not quite sure that he was the best person she could by any possibility marry.—

It is odd enough to read over what I have just been writing. It is the merest fancy that ever was in the world. I shall never be married. She will; and if she is as pleasant as she has been so far, I will give her a silver tea-set, and go and take tea with her and her husband, sometimes. No coffee, I hope, though,—it depresses me sadly.—I feel very miserably; they must have been grinding it at home.—Another morning walk will be good for me, and I don't doubt the schoolmistress will be glad of a little fresh air before school.

The throbbing flushes of the poetical intermittent have been coming over me from time to time of late. Did you ever see that electrical experiment which consists in passing a flash through letters of gold-leaf in a darkened room, whereupon some name or legend springs out of the darkness in characters of fire?

There are songs all written out in my soul, which I could read if the flash might pass through them; but the fire must come down from heaven. Ah! but what if the stormy *nimbus* of youthful passion has blown by, and one asks for lightning from the ragged *cirrus* of dissolving aspirations, or the silvered *cumulus* of sluggish satiety? I will call on her whom the dead poets believed in, whom living ones no longer worship—the immortal maid who, name her what you will—Goddess, Muse, Spirit of Beauty—sits by the pillow of every youthful poet, and bends over his pale forehead until her tresses lie upon his cheek and rain their gold into his dreams.

#### MUSA.

O my lost Beauty!—Fast thou folded quite  
 Thy wings of morning light  
 Beyond those iron gates  
 Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,  
 And Age upon his mound of ashes waits  
 To chill our fiery dreams,  
 Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy streams?  
 Leave me not fading in these weeds of care,  
 Whose flowers are silvered hair!—  
 Have I not loved thee long,  
 Though my young lips have often done thee wrong,  
 And vexed thy heaven-tuned ear with careless song?  
 Ah, wilt thou yet return,  
 Bearing thy rose-hued torch, and bid thine altar burn?

Come to me !—I will flood thy silent shrine  
 With my soul's sacred wine,  
 And heap thy marble floors  
 As the wild spice-trees waste their fragrant stores  
 In leafy islands walled with madrepores  
 And lapped in Orient seas,  
 When all their feathery palms toss, plume-like, in the breeze.

Come to me !—Thou shalt feed on honeyed words,  
 Sweeter than song of birds ;—  
 No wailing bulbul's throat,  
 No melting dulcimer's melodious note,  
 When o'er the midnight wave its murmurs float,  
 Thy ravished sense might soothe  
 With flow so liquid soft, with strain so velvet-smooth.

Thou shalt be decked with jewels, like a queen,  
 Sought in those bowers of green  
 Where loop the clustered vines  
 And the close-clinging dulcamara twines—  
 Pure pearls of Maydew where the moonlight shines,  
 And Summer's fruited gems,  
 And coral pendants shorn from Autumn's berried stems.

Sit by me drifting on the sleepy waves—  
 Or stretched by grass-grown graves,  
 Whose gray, high-shouldered stones,  
 Carved with old names Life's time-worn roll disowns,  
 Lean, lichen-spotted o'er the crumbled bones  
 Still slumbering where they lay  
 While the sad pilgrim watched to scare the wolf away.

Spread o'er my couch thy visionary wing !  
 Still let me dream and sing—  
 Dream of that winding shore  
 Where scarlet cardinals bloom—for me no more—  
 The stream with heaven beneath its liquid floor,  
 And clustering nenuphars  
 Sprinkling its mirrored blue like golden-chaliced stars !

Come while their balms the linden blossoms shed !  
 Come while the rose is red—  
 While blue-eyed Summer smiles  
 On the green ripples round yon sunken piles  
 Washed by the moon-wave warm from Indian Isles,  
 And on the sultry air  
 The chestnuts spread their palms like holy men in prayer !

Oh, for thy burning lips to fire my brain  
 With thrills of wild, sweet pain !—  
 On life's autumnal blast,  
 Like shrivelled leaves, youth's passion-flowers are cast—  
 Once loving thee, we love thee to the last !  
 Behold thy new-decked shrine,  
 And hear once more the voice that breathed, " For ever thine ! "

## XI.

[The company looked a little flustered one morning when I came in—so much so, that I inquired of my neighbour the divinity-student what had been going on. It appears that the

young fellow whom they call John had taken advantage of my being a little late (I having been rather longer than usual dressing that morning) to circulate several questions involving a quibble or play upon words—in short, containing that indignity to the human understanding, condemned in the passages from the distinguished moralist of the last century and the illustrious historian of the present, which I cited on a former occasion, and known as a *pun*. After breakfast, one of the boarders handed me a small roll of papers containing some of the questions and their answers. I subjoin two or three of them, to show what a tendency there is to frivolity and meaningless talk in young persons of a certain sort, when not restrained by the presence of more reflective natures. It was asked, “Why tertian and quartan fevers were like certain short-lived insects.” Some interesting physiological relation would be naturally suggested. The inquirer blushes to find that the answer is in the paltry equivocation, that they *skip* a day or two. “Why an Englishman must go to the continent to weaken his grog or punch.” The answer proves to have no relation whatever to the temperance movement, as no better reason is given than that island- (or, as it is absurdly written, *ile and*) water won’t mix. But when I came to the next question and its answer, I felt that patience ceased to be a virtue. “Why an onion is like a piano” is a query that a person of sensibility would be slow to propose; but that in an educated community an individual could be found to answer it in these words—“Because it smell odious,” *quasi*, it’s melodious—is not credible, but too true. I can show you the paper.

Dear reader, I beg your pardon for repeating such things. I know most conversations reported in books are altogether above such trivial details, but folly will come up at every table as surely as purslain and chickweed and sorrel will come up in gardens. This young fellow ought to have talked philosophy, I know perfectly well; but he didn’t—he made jokes.]

I am willing, I said, to exercise your ingenuity in a rational and contemplative manner. No, I do not proscribe certain forms of philosophical speculation which involve an approach to the absurd or the ludicrous, such as you may find, for example, in the folio of the Reverend Father Thomas Sanchez, in his famous Disputations, “De Sancto Matrimonio.” I will therefore turn this levity of yours to profit by reading you a rhymed problem, wrought out by my friend the Professor.

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE:  
OR, THE WONDERFUL “ONE-HOSS SHAY.”

A LOGICAL STORY.

Have you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay  
That was built in such a logical way,

It ran a hundred years to a day,  
 And then, of a sudden, it—ah, but stav.  
 I'll tell you what happened without delay,  
 Scaring the parson into fits,  
 Frightening people out of their wits—  
 Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.  
*Georgius Secundus* was then alive—  
 Snuffy old drone from the German hive.  
 That was the year when Lisbon town  
 Saw the earth open and gulp her down,  
 And Braddock's army was done so brown,  
 Left without a scalp to its crown,  
 It was on the terrible Earthquake-day  
 That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.  
 Now, in building of chaises, I'll tell you what,  
 There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot—  
 In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,  
 In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,  
 In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace—lurking still,  
 Find it somewhere you must and will—  
 Above or below, or within or without—  
 And that's the reason, beyond a doubt,  
 A chaise *breaks down*, but doesn't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,  
 With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell yeou"),  
 He would build one shay to beat the taown  
 'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';  
 It should be so built that it *couldn't* break daown:  
 "Fur," said the Deacon, "'tis mighty plain  
 Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the sirain;  
 'n' the way to fix it, uz I maintain,  
     Is only jest  
 T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk  
 Where he could find the strongest oak,  
 That couldn't be split nor bent nor broke—  
 That was for spokes and floor and sills;  
 He sent for lancewood to make the thills;  
 The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees;  
 The panels, of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,  
 But lasts like iron for things like these;  
 The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"  
 Last of its timber—they couldn't sell 'em,  
 Never an axe had seen their chips,  
 And the wedges flew from between their lips,  
 Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;  
 Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,  
 Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,  
 Steel of the finest, bright and blue;  
 Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;  
 Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide  
 Found in the pit when the tanner died.  
 That was the way he "put her through."—  
 "There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew."

Do ! I tell you, I rather guess  
 She was a wonder, and nothing less !  
 Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,  
 Deacon and Deaconess dropped away,  
 Children and grandchildren—where were they ?  
 But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay  
 As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day !

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED : it came and found  
 The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.  
 Eighteen hundred increased by ten—  
 " Hahnsum kerridge " they called it then.  
 Eighteen hundred and twenty came—  
 Running as usual ; much the same.  
 Thirty and forty at last arrive,  
 And then come fifty and FIFTY-FIVE,

Little of all we value here  
 Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year  
 Without both feeling and looking queer.  
 In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,  
 So far as I know, but a tree and truth.  
 (This is a moral that runs at large ;  
 Take it.—You're welcome.—No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER—the Earthquake-day.—  
 There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,  
 A general flavour of mild decay,  
 But nothing local, as one may say.  
 There couldn't be, for the Deacon's art  
 Had made it so like in every part  
 That there wasn't a chance for one to start.  
 For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,  
 And the floor was just as strong as the sills,  
 And the panels just as strong as the floor,  
 And the whippetree neither less nor more,  
 And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,  
 And spring and axle and hub *encore*.  
 And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt  
 In another hour it will be *worn out* !

First of November, 'Fifty-five !  
 This morning the parson takes a drive.  
 Now, small boys, get out of the way !  
 Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,  
 Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.  
 " Huddup ! " said the parson.—Off went they.

The parson was working his Sunday text—  
 Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed  
 At what the—Moses—was coming next.  
 All at once the horse stood still,  
 Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.  
 —First a shiver, and then a thrill,  
 Then something decidedly like a spill—  
 And the parson was sitting upon a rock,  
 At half-past nine by the meet'n'-house clock—  
 Just the hour of the Earthquake-shock !  
 —What do you think the parson found,  
 When he got up and stared around ?



The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,  
 As if it had been to the mill and ground !  
 You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,  
 How it went to pieces all at once—  
 All at once, and nothing first—  
 Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.  
 Logic is logic. That's all I say.

I think there is one habit, I said to our company a day or two afterwards, worse than that of punning. It is the gradual substitution of cant or flash terms for words which truly characterise their objects. I have known several very genteel idiots whose whole vocabulary had deliquesced into some half-dozen expressions. All things fell into one of two great categories—*fast* or *slow*. Man's chief end was to be a *brick*. When the great calamities of life overtook their friends, these last were spoken of as being *a good deal cut up*. Nine-tenths of human existence were summed up in the single word *bore*. These expressions come to be the algebraic symbols of minds which have grown too weak or indolent to discriminate. They are the blank checks of intellectual bankruptcy ; you may fill them up with what idea you like ; it makes no difference, for there are no funds in the treasury upon which they are drawn. Colleges and good-for-nothing smoking-clubs are the places where these conversational fungi spring up most luxuriantly. Don't think I undervalue the proper use and application of a cant word or phrase. It adds piquancy to conversation, as a mushroom does to a sauce. But it is no better than a toadstool, odious to the sense and poisonous to the intellect, when it spawns itself all over the talk of men and youths capable of talking, as it sometimes does. As we hear flash phraseology, it is commonly the dish-water from the washings of English dandyism, schoolboy or full-grown, wrung out of a three-volume novel which had sopped it up, or decanted from the pictured urn of Mr. Verdant Green, and diluted to suit the provincial climate.

The young fellow called John spoke up sharply and said it was "rum" to hear me "pitchin' into fellers" for "goin' it in the slang line," when I used all the flash words myself just when I pleased.

I replied with my usual forbearance.—Certainly, to give up the algebraic symbol, because *a* or *b* is often a cover for ideal nihility, would be unwise. I have heard a child labouring to express a certain condition, involving a hitherto-undescribed sensation (as it supposed), all of which could have been sufficiently explained by the participle—*bored*. I have seen a country clergyman, with a one-story intellect and a one-horse vocabulary, who has consumed his valuable time (and mine) freely, in developing an opinion of a brother minister's discourse which would have been abundantly characterised by a peach-down-lipped so-

phomore in the one word—*slow*. Let us discriminate, and be shy of absolute proscription. I am omniverbivorous by nature and training. Passing by such words as are poisonous, I can swallow most others, and chew such as I cannot swallow.

Dandies are not good for much, but they are good for something. They invent or keep in circulation those conversational blank checks or counters just spoken of, which intellectual capitalists may sometimes find it worth their while to borrow of them. They are useful, too, in keeping up the standard of dress, which, but for them, would deteriorate, and become, what some old fools would have it, a matter of convenience, and not of taste and art. Yes, I like dandies well enough, on one condition.

What is that, sir? said the divinity-student.

That they have pluck. I find that lies at the bottom of all true dandyism. A little boy dressed up very fine, who puts his finger in his mouth and takes to crying, if other boys make fun of him, looks very silly. But if he turns red in the face and knotty in the fists, and makes an example of the biggest of his assailants, throwing off his fine leghorn and his thickly-buttoned jacket, if necessary, to consummate the act of justice, his small toggery takes on the splendours of the crested helmet that frightened Astyanax. You remember that the Duke said his dandy officers were his best officers. The "Sunday blood," the super-superb sartorial equestrian of our annual Fast-day, is not imposing or dangerous. But such fellows as Brummel and D'Orsay and Byron are not to be snubbed quite so easily. Look out for "*la main de fer sous le gant de velours*" (which I printed in English the other day without quotation-marks, thinking whether any *scarabæus criticus* would add this to his globe and roll in glory with it into the newspapers—which he didn't do it, in the charming pleonasm of the London language, and therefore I claim the sole merit of exposing the same). A good many powerful and dangerous people have had a decided dash of dandyism about them. There was Alcibiades the "curled son of Clinias," an accomplished young man, but what would be called a "swell" in these days. There was Aristoteles, a very distinguished writer, of whom you have heard—a philosopher, in short, whom it took centuries to learn, centuries to unlearn, and is now going to take a generation or more to learn over again. Regular dandy, he was. So was Marcus Antonius; and though he lost his game, he played for big stakes, and it wasn't his dandyism that spoiled his chance. Petrarca was not to be despised as a scholar or a poet, but he was one of the same sort. So was Sir Humphrey Davy; so was Lord Palmerston, formerly, if I am not forgetful. Yes, a dandy is good for something, as such; and dandies such as I was just speaking of have rocked this planet like a cradle—ay, and left it swinging to this day. Still, if I were you, I wouldn't go to the tailor's, on the

strength of these remarks, and run up a long bill which will render pockets a superfluity in your next suit. *Elegans "nascitur, non fit."* A man is born a dandy, as he is born a poet. There are heads that can't wear hats; there are necks that can't fit cravats; there are jaws that can't fill out collars—(Willis touched this last point in one of his earlier ambrotypes, if I remember rightly); there are *tournures* nothing can humanise, and movements nothing can subdue to the gracious suavity or elegant languor or stately serenity which belong to different styles of dandyism.

We are forming an aristocracy, as you may observe, in this country,—not a *gratiâ-Dei*, nor a *jure-divino* one,—but a *de-facto* upper stratum of being, which floats over the turbid waves of common life like the iridescent film you may have seen spreading over the water about our wharves,—very splendid, though its origin may have been tar, tallow, train-oil, or other such unctuous commodities. I say, then, we are forming an aristocracy; and, transitory as its individual life often is, it maintains itself tolerably, as a whole. Of course, money is its corner-stone. But now observe this. Money kept for two or three generations transforms a race,—I don't mean merely in manners and hereditary culture, but in blood and bone. Money buys air and sunshine, in which children grow up more kindly, of course, than in close, back streets; it buys country-places to give them happy and healthy summers, good nursing, good doctoring, and the best cuts of beef and mutton. When the spring-chickens come to market—I beg your pardon—that is not what I was going to speak of. As the young females of each successive season come on, the finest specimens among them, other things being equal, are apt to attract those who can afford the expensive luxury of beauty. The physical character of the next generation rises in consequence. It is plain that certain families have in this way acquired an elevated type of face and figure, and that in a small circle of city connections one may sometimes find models of both sexes which one of the rural counties would find it hard to match from all its townships put together. Because there is a good deal of running down, of degeneration and waste of life, among the richer classes, you must not overlook the equally obvious fact I have just spoken of,—which in one or two generations more will be, I think, much more patent than just now.

The weak point in our chryso-aristocracy is the same I have alluded to in connection with cheap dandyism. Its thorough manhood, its high-caste gallantry, are not so manifest as the plate-glass of its windows and the more or less legitimate heraldry of its coach-panels. It is very curious to observe of how small account military folks are held among our Northern people. Our young men must gild their spurs, but they need not win them. The equal division of property keeps the younger

sons of rich people above the necessity of military service. Thus the army loses an element of refinement, and the moneyed upper class forgets what it is to count heroism among its virtues. Still I don't believe in any aristocracy without pluck as its back-bone. Ours may show it when the time comes, if it ever does come.

These United States furnish the greatest market for intellectual *green fruit* of all the places in the world. I think so, at any rate. The demand for intellectual labour is so enormous, and the market so far from nice, that young talent is apt to fare like unripe gooseberries,—get plucked to make a fool of. Think of a country which buys eighty thousand copies of the *Proverbial Philosophy*, while the author's admiring countrymen have been buying twelve thousand! How can one let his fruit hang in the sun until it gets fully ripe, while there are eighty thousand such hungry mouths ready to swallow it and proclaim its praises? Consequently, there never was such a collection of crude pippins and half-grown windfalls as our native literature displays among its fruits. There are literary green-groceries at every corner, which will buy any thing from a button-pear to a pineapple. It takes a long apprenticeship to train a whole people to reading and writing. The temptation of money and fame is too great for young people. Do I not remember that glorious moment when the late Mr. — we won't say who,—editor of the — we won't say what,—offered me the sum of fifty cents *per* double-columned quarto page for shaking my young boughs over his foolscap apron? Was it not an intoxicating vision of gold and glory? I should doubtless have revelled in its wealth and splendour, but for learning that the *fifty cents* was to be considered a rhetorical embellishment, and by no means a literal expression of past fact or present intention.—

Beware of making your moral staple consist of the negative virtues. It is good to abstain, and teach others to abstain, from all that is sinful or hurtful. But making a business of it leads to emaciation of character, unless one feeds largely also on the more nutritious diet of active sympathetic benevolence.—

I don't believe one word of what you are saying,—spoke up the angular female in black bombazine.

I am sorry you disbelieve it, madam,—I said, and added softly to my next neighbour,—but you prove it.

The young fellow sitting near me winked; and the divinity-student said, in an undertone,—*Optime dictum.*

Your talking Latin,—said I,—reminds me of an odd trick of one of my old tutors. He read so much of that language, that his English half turned into it. He got caught in town, one hot summer, in pretty close quarters, and wrote, or began to write, a series of city pastorals. Eclogues he called them, and meant to have published them by subscription. I remember some of his verses, if you want to hear them.—You, sir (addressing myself

to the divinity-student), and all such as have been through college, or, what is the same thing, received an honorary degree, will understand them without a dictionary. The old man had a great deal to say about "æstivation," as he called it, in opposition, as one might say, to *hibernation*. Intramural æstivation, or town-life in summer, he would say, is a peculiar form of suspended existence, or semi-asphyxia. One wakes up from it about the beginning of the last week in September. This is what I remember of his poem :

#### ÆSTIVATION.

*An Unpublished Poem, by my late Latin Tutor.*

In candent ire the solar splendor flames ;  
The foles, languescant, pend from arid rames ;  
His humid front the cive, anhelant, wipes,  
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,  
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,  
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,  
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine !

To me, alas ! no verdurous visions come,  
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum,—  
No concave vast repeats the tender hue  
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue !

Me wretched ! Let me curr to quercine shades !  
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids !  
O, might I vole to some umbrageous clump,—  
Depart,—be off,—excede,—evade,—erump !

I have lived by the sea-shore and by the mountains.—No, I am not going to say which is best. The one where your place is, is the best for you. But this difference there is: you can domesticate mountains, but the sea is *feræ naturæ*. You may have a hut, or know the owner of one, on the mountain-side; you see a light half-way up its ascent in the evening, and you know there is a home, and you might share it. You have noted certain trees, perhaps; you know the particular zone where the hemlocks look so black in October, when the maples and beeches have faded. All its reliefs and intaglios have electrotyped themselves in the medallions that hang round the walls of your memory's chamber.—The sea remembers nothing. It is feline. It licks your feet,—its huge flanks purr very pleasantly for you; but it will crack your bones and eat you, for all that, and wipe the crimsoned foam from its jaws as if nothing had happened. The mountains give their lost children berries and water; the sea mocks their thirst and lets them die. The mountains have a grand, stupid, lovable tranquillity; the sea has a fascinating, treacherous intelligence. The mountains lie about like huge ruminants, their broad backs awful to look upon, but safe to handle. The sea smoothes its silver scales, until you cannot see their joints,—but their shining is that of a snake's

belly, after all.—In deeper suggestiveness I find as great a difference. The mountains dwarf mankind and foreshorten the procession of its long generations. The sea drowns out humanity and time; it has no sympathy with either; for it belongs to eternity, and of that it sings its monotonous song for ever and ever.

Yet I should love to have a little box by the sea-shore. I should love to gaze out on the wild feline element from a front window of my own, just as I should love to look on a caged panther, and see it stretch its shining length, and then curl over and lap its smooth sides, and by and by begin to lash itself into rage and show its white teeth and spring at its bars, and howl the cry of its mad, but, to me, harmless, fury. And then, to look at it with that inward eye—who does not love to shuffle off time and its concerns at intervals—to forget who is President and who is Governor, what race he belongs to, what language he speaks, which golden-headed nail of the firmament his particular planetary system is hung upon, and listen to the great liquid metronome as it beats its solemn measure, steadily swinging when the solo or duet of human life began, and to swing just as steadily after the human chorus has died out and man is a fossil on its shores?

What should decide one in choosing a summer residence?—Constitution, first of all. How much snow could you melt in an hour, if you were planted in a hogshead of it? Comfort is essential to enjoyment. All sensitive people should remember that persons in easy circumstances suffer much more from cold in summer—that is, the warm half of the year—than in winter, or the other half. You must cut your climate to your constitution, as much as your clothing to your shape. After this, consult your taste and convenience. But if you would be happy in Berkshire, you must carry mountains in your brain; and if you would enjoy Nahant, you must have an ocean in your soul. Nature plays at dominos with you; you must match her piece, or she will never give it up to you.

The schoolmistress said, in a rather mischievous way, that she was afraid some minds or souls would be a little crowded, if they took in the Rocky Mountains or the Atlantic.

Have you ever read the little book called *The Stars and the Earth*? said I. Have you seen the Declaration of Independence photographed in a surface that a fly's foot would cover? The forms or conditions of Time and Space, as Kant will tell you, are nothing in themselves—only our way of looking at things. You are right, I think, however, in recognising the category of Space as being quite as applicable to minds as to the outer world. Every man of reflection is vaguely conscious of an imperfectly defined circle which is drawn about his intellect. He has a perfectly clear sense that the fragments of his

intellectual circle include the curves of many other minds of which he is cognisant. He often recognises these as manifestly concentric with his own, but of less radius. On the other hand, when we find a portion of an arc on the outside of our own, we say it *intersects* ours, but are very slow to confess or to see that it *circumscribes* it. Every now and then a man's mind is stretched by a new idea or sensation, and never shrinks back to its former dimensions. After looking at the Alps, I felt that my mind had been stretched beyond the limits of its elasticity, and fitted so loosely on my old ideas of space that I had to spread these to fit it.

If I thought I should ever see the Alps! said the school-mistress.

Perhaps you will, some time or other, I said.

It is not very likely, she answered. I have had one or two opportunities, but I had rather be any thing than governess in a rich family.

[Proud, too, you little soft-voiced woman! Well, I can't say I like you any the worse for it. How long will school-keeping take to kill you? Is it possible the poor thing works with her needle, too? I don't like those marks on the side of her forefinger.

*Tableau.* Chamouni. Mont Blanc in full view. Figures in the foreground; two of them standing apart; one of them a gentleman of—oh—ah—yes! the other a lady in a white cashmere, leaning on his shoulder. The ingenuous reader will understand that this was an internal, private, personal, subjective diorama, seen for one instant on the background of my own consciousness, and abolished into black nonentity by the first question which recalled me to actual life, as suddenly as if one of those iron shop-blinds (which I always pass at dusk with a shiver, expecting to stumble over some poor but honest shop-boy's head, just taken off by its sudden and unexpected descent, and left outside upon the side-walk) had come down in front of it "by the run."]

Should you like to hear what moderate wishes life brings one to at last? I used to be very ambitious—wasteful, extravagant, and luxurious in all my fancies. Read too much in the *Arabian Nights*. Must have the lamp—couldn't do without the ring. Exercise every morning on the brazen horse. Plump down into castles as full of little milk-white princesses as a nest is of young sparrows. All love me dearly at once. Charming idea of life, but too high-coloured for the reality. I have outgrown all this; my tastes have become exceedingly primitive—almost, perhaps, ascetic. We carry happiness into our condition, but must not hope to find it there. I think you will be willing to hear some lines which embody the subdued and limited desires of my maturity.—



## CONTENTMENT.

"Man wants but little here below."

Little I ask ; my wants are few ;  
 I only wish a hut of stone  
 (A *very plain* brown stone will do,  
 That I may call my own—  
 And close at hand is such a one,  
 In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me ;  
 Three courses are as good as ten ;—  
 If Nature can subsist on three,  
 Thank Heaven for three. Amen !  
 I always thought cold victuals nice ;—  
 My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land ;—  
 Give me a mortgage here and there—  
 Some good bank-stock—some note of hand,  
 Or trifling railroad share ;  
 I only ask that fortune send  
 A *little more* than I shall spend.

Honours are silly toys, I know,  
 And titles are but empty names ;—  
 I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo—  
 But only near St. James ;  
 I'm very sure I should not care  
 To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles ; 'tis a sin  
 To care for such unfruitful things ;  
 One good-sized diamond in a pin,  
 Some, *not so large*, in rings,  
 A ruby, and a pearl or so,  
 Will do for me—I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire ;  
 (Good heavy silks are never dear) ;  
 I own perhaps I *might* desire  
 Some shawls of true Cashmere,  
 Some marrowy crapes of China silk,  
 Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive  
 So fast that folks must stop and stare ;  
 An easy gait—two, forty-five—  
 Suits me ; I do not care :  
 Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,  
 Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures I should like to own  
 Titians and Raphaels three or four—  
 I love so much their style and tone—  
 One Turner, and no more—  
 (A *landscape*—foreground golden dirt,  
 The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

Of books but few—some fifty score  
 For daily use and bound for wear;  
 The rest upon an upper floor;  
 Some *little* luxury there  
 Of red morocco's gilded gleam,  
 And vellum rich as country cream.  
 Busts, cameos, gems—such things as these,  
 Which others often show for pride,  
 I value for their power to please,  
 And selfish churls deride;  
 One Stradivarius, I confess,  
 Two meerschaums, I would fain possess.  
 Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,  
 Nor ape the glittering upstart foal;  
 Shall not carved tables serve my turn,  
 But *all* must be of buhl?  
 Give grasping pomp its double share—  
 I ask but *one* recumbent chair.  
 Thus humble let me live and die,  
 Nor long for Midas' golden touch,  
 If Heaven more generous gifts deny.  
 I shall not miss them *much*—  
 Too grateful for the blessing lent  
 Of simple tastes and mind content!

## MY LAST WALK WITH THE SCHOOLMISTRESS.

(A Parenthesis.)

I can't say just how many walks she and I had taken together before this one. I found the effect of going out every morning was decidedly favourable on her health. Two pleasing dimples, the places for which were just marked when she came, played, shadowy, in her freshening cheeks when she smiled and nodded good morning to me from the school-house steps.

I am afraid I did the greater part of the talking. At any rate, if I should try to report all that I said during the first half-dozen walks we took together, I fear that I might receive a gentle hint from my friends the publishers that a separate volume, at my own risk and expense, would be the proper method of bringing them before the public.—

I would have a woman as true as Death. At the first real lie which works from the heart outward, she should be tenderly chloroformed into a better world, where she can have an angel for a governess, and feed on strange fruits which will make her all over again, even to her bones and marrow.—Whether gifted with the accident of beauty or not, she should have been moulded in the rose-red clay of Love, before the breath of life made a moving mortal of her. Love-capacity is a congenital endowment; and I think, after a while, one gets to know the warm-hued natures it belongs to from the pretty pipe-clay counterfeits of them.—Proud she may be, in the sense of respecting herself; but pride in the sense of condemning others less gifted

At last the trees take up their solemn line of march, and never rest until they have encamped in the market-place. Wait long enough, and you will find an old doting oak hugging a huge worn block in its yellow underground arms; that was the corner-stone of the State-House. Oh, so patient she is, this imperturbable Nature!

Let us cry!—

But all this has nothing to do with my walks and talks with the schoolmistress. I did not say that I would not tell you something about them. Let me alone, and I shall talk to you more than I ought to, probably. We never tell our secrets to people that pump for them.

Books we talked about, and education. It was her duty to know something of these, and of course she did. Perhaps I was somewhat more learned than she, but I found that the difference between her reading and mine was like that of a man's and a woman's dusting a library. The man flaps about with a bunch of feathers; the woman goes to work softly with a cloth. She does not raise half the dust, nor fill her own mouth and eyes with it,—but she goes into all the corners, and attends to the leaves as much as the covers.—Books are the *negative* pictures of thought, and the more sensitive the mind that receives their images, the more nicely the finest lines are reproduced. A woman (of the right kind), reading after a man, follows him as Ruth followed the reapers of Boaz, and her gleanings are often the finest of the wheat.

But it was in talking of Life that we came most nearly together. I thought I knew something about that,—that I could speak or write about it somewhat to the purpose.

To take up this fluid earthly being of ours as a sponge sucks up water,—to be steeped and soaked in its realities as a hide fills its pores lying seven years in a tan-pit,—to have winnowed every wave of it as a mill-wheel works up the stream that runs through the flume upon its float-boards,—to have curled up in the keenest spasms and flattened out in the laxest languors of this breathing-sickness, which keeps certain parcels of matter uneasy for three or four score years,—to have fought all the devils and clasped all the angels of its delirium,—and then, just at the point when the white-hot passions have cooled down to cherry-red, plunge our experience into the ice-cold stream of some human language or other, one might think would end in a rhapsody with something of spring and temper in it. All this I thought my power and province.

The schoolmistress had tried life, too. Once in a while one meets with a single soul greater than all the living pageant which passes before it. As the pale astronomer sits in his study with sunken eyes and thin fingers, and weighs Uranus or Neptune as in a balance, so there are meek, slight women who have weighed all which this planetary life can offer, and hold it like a

bauble in the palm of their slender hands. This was one of them. Fortune had left her, sorrow had baptised her; the routine of labour and the loneliness of almost friendless city life were before her. Yet, as I looked upon her tranquil face, gradually regaining a cheerfulness which was often sprightly, as she became interested in the various matters we talked about and places we visited, I saw that eye and lip and every shifting lineament were made for love,—unconscious of their sweet office as yet, and meeting the cold aspect of Duty with the natural graces which were meant for the reward of nothing less than the Great Passion.—

I never addressed one word of love to the schoolmistress in the course of these pleasant walks. It seemed to me that we talked of everything but love on that particular morning. There was, perhaps, a little more timidity and hesitancy on my part than I have commonly shown among our people at the boarding-house. In fact, I considered myself the master at the breakfast-table; but, somehow, I could not command myself just then so well as usual. The truth is, I had secured a passage to Liverpool in the steamer which was to leave at noon,—with the condition, however, of being released in case circumstances occurred to detain me. The schoolmistress knew nothing about all this, of course, as yet. It was on the Common that we were walking. The *mall*, or boulevard of our Common, you know, has various branches leading from it in different directions. One of these runs down from opposite Joy Street southward across the whole length of the Common to Boylston Street. We called it the long path, and were fond of it.

I felt very weak indeed (though of a tolerably robust habit) as we came opposite the head of this path on that morning. I think I tried to speak twice without making myself distinctly audible. At last I got out the question,—Will you take the long path with me?—Certainly,—said the schoolmistress,—with much pleasure.—Think,—I said,—before you answer; if you take the long path with me now, I shall interpret it that we are to part no more!—The schoolmistress stepped back with a sudden movement, as if an arrow had struck her.

One of the long granite blocks used as seats was hard by,—the one you may still see, close by the gingko-tree.—Pray, sit down,—I said.—No, no, she answered softly,—I will walk the *long path* with you!—

The old gentleman who sits opposite met us walking arm in arm, about the middle of the long path, and said, very charmingly,—“Good morning, my dears!”

## XII.

[I DID not think it probable that I should have a great many more talks with our company, and therefore I was anxious to get as much as I could into every conversation. That is the

reason why you will find some odd, miscellaneous facts here, which I wished to tell at least once, as I should not have a chance to tell them habitually, at our breakfast-table.—We're very free and easy, you know; we don't read what we don't like. Our parish is so large, one can't pretend to preach to all the pews at once. One can't be all the time trying to do the best of one's best; if a company works a steam fire-engine, the firemen needn't be straining themselves all day to squirt over the top of the flag-staff. Let them wash some of those lower-storey windows a little. Besides, there is no use in our quarrelling now, as you will find out when you get through this paper.]—

Travel, according to my experience, does not exactly correspond to the idea one gets of it out of most books of travels. I am thinking of travel as it was when I made the Grand Tour, especially in Italy. Memory is a net; one finds it full of fish when he takes it from the brook; but a dozen miles of water have run through it without sticking. I can prove some facts about travelling by a story or two. There are certain principles to be assumed,—such as these:—He who is carried by horses must deal with rogues.—To-day's dinner subtends a larger visual angle than yesterday's revolution. A mote in my eye is bigger to me than the biggest of Dr. Gould's private planets.—Every traveller is a self-taught entomologist.—Old jokes are dynamometers of mental tension; an old joke tells better among friends travelling than at home,—which shows that their minds are in a state of diminished rather than increased vitality. There was a story about “strahps to your pahnts,” which was vastly funny to us fellows—on the road from Milan to Venice.—*Cælum non animum*,—travellers change their guineas, but not their characters. The bore is the same, eating dates under the cedars of Lebanon, as over a plate of baked beans in Beacon Street.—Parties of travellers have a morbid instinct for “establishing raws” upon each other.—A man shall sit down with his friend at the foot of the Great Pyramid, and they will take up the question they had been talking about under “the great elm,” and forget all about Egypt. When I was crossing the Po, we were all fighting about the propriety of one fellow's telling another that his argument was *absurd*; one maintaining it to be a perfectly admissible logical term, as proved by the phrase “*reductio ad absurdum*,” the rest badgering him as a conversational bully. Mighty little we troubled ourselves for *Padus*, the Po, “a river broader and more rapid than the Rhone,” and the times when Hannibal led his grim Africans to its banks, and his elephants thrust their trunks into the yellow waters over which that pendulum ferry-boat was swinging back and forward every ten minutes!—

Here are some of those reminiscences, with morals prefixed, or annexed, or implied.

*Lively emotions* very commonly do not strike us full in front,

but obliquely from the side ; a scene or incident in *undress* often affects us more than one in full costume.

“ Is this the mighty ocean ?—is this all ? ”

says the princess in Gebir. The rush that should have flooded my soul in the Coliseum did not come. But walking one day in the fields about the city, I stumbled over a fragment of broken masonry, and lo ! the World’s Mistress in her stone girdle—*alta mænia Romæ*—rose before me and whitened my cheek with her pale shadow as never before or since.

I used very often, when coming home from my morning’s work at one of the public institutions of Paris, to stop in at the dear old church of St. Etienne du Mont. The tomb of St. Genevieve, surrounded by burning candles and votive tablets, was there ; the mural tablet of Jacobus Benignus Winslow was there ; there was a noble organ with carved figures ; the pulpit was borne on the oaken shoulders of a stooping Samson ; and there was a marvellous staircase like a coil of lace. These things I mention from memory, but not all of them together impressed me so much as an inscription on a small slab of marble fixed in one of the walls. It told how this church of St. Stephen was repaired and beautified in the year 16\*\*, and how, during the celebration of its reopening, two girls of the parish (*filles de la paroisse*) fell from the gallery, carrying a part of the balustrade with them, to the pavement, but by a miracle escaped uninjured. Two young girls, nameless, but real presences to my imagination, as much as when they came fluttering down on the tiles with a cry that outscrambled the sharpest treble in the *Te Deum*. (Look at Carlyle’s article on Boswell, and see how he speaks of the poor young woman Johnson talked with in the streets one evening.) All the crowd gone but these two “ *filles de la paroisse* ”—gone as utterly as the dresses they wore, as the shoes that were on their feet, as the bread and meat that were in the market on that day.

Not the great historical events, but the personal incidents that call up single sharp pictures of some human being in its pang or struggle, reach us most nearly. I remember the platform at Berne, over the parapet of which Theobald Weinzäpfli’s restive horse sprung with him and landed him more than a hundred feet beneath in the lower town, not dead, but sorely broken, and no longer a wild youth, but God’s servant from that day forward. I have forgotten the famous bears, and all else.—I remember the Percy lion on the bridge over the little river at Alnwick—the leaden lion with his tail stretched out straight like a pump-handle—and why ? Because of the story of the village boy who must fain bestride the leaden tail, standing out over the water, which breaking, he dropped into the stream far below, and was taken out an idiot for the rest of his life.

Arrow-heads must be brought to a sharp point, and the guillo-

tine-axe must have a slanting edge. Something intensely human, narrow, and definite pierces to the seat of our sensibilities more readily than huge occurrences and catastrophes. A nail will pick a lock that defies hatchet and hammer. The Royal George went down with all her crew, and Cowper wrote an exquisitely simple poem about it; but the leaf which holds it is smooth, while that which bears the lines on his mother's portrait is blistered with tears.

My telling these recollections sets me thinking of others of the same kind which strike the imagination, especially when one is still young. You remember the monument in Devizes Market to the woman struck dead with a lie in her mouth. I never saw that, but it is in the books. Here is one I never heard mentioned; if any of the "Note and Query" tribe can tell the story, I hope they will. Where is this monument? I was riding on an English stage-coach when we passed a handsome marble column (as I remember it) of considerable size and pretensions. What is that? I said. That, answered the coachman, is the *hangman's pillar*. Then he told me how a man went out one night, many years ago, to steal sheep. He caught one, tied its legs together, passed the rope over his head, and started for home. In climbing a fence, the rope slipped, caught him by the neck, and strangled him. Next morning he was found hanging dead on one side of the fence and the sheep on the other; in memory whereof the lord of the manor caused this monument to be erected as a warning to all who love mutton better than virtue. I will send a copy of this record to him or her who shall first set me right about this column and its locality.

And telling over these old stories reminds me that I have something which may interest architects, and perhaps some other persons. I once ascended the spire of Strasburg Cathedral, which is the highest, I think, in Europe. It is a shaft of stone filigree-work, frightfully open, so that the guide puts his arms behind you to keep you from falling. To climb it is a noonday nightmare, and to think of having climbed it crisps all the fifty-six joints of one's twenty digits. While I was on it, "pinnacled dim in the intense inane," a strong wind was blowing, and I felt sure that the spire was rocking. It swayed back and forward like a stalk of rye or a cat-o'-nine-tails (bulrush) with a bobolink on it. I mentioned it to the guide, and he said that the spire did really swing back and forward—I think he said some feet.

Keep any line of knowledge ten years, and some other line will intersect it. Long afterwards I was hunting out a paper of Dumeril's in an old journal—the *Magazin Encyclopédique* for *l'an troisième* (1795), when I stumbled upon a brief article on the vibrations of the spire of Strasburg Cathedral. A man can shake it so that the movement shall be shown in a vessel of water nearly seventy feet below the summit, and higher up the vibration is like that of an earthquake. I have seen one of



those wretched wooden spires with which we very shabbily finish some of our stone churches (thinking that the lidless blue eye of heaven cannot tell the counterfeit we try to pass on it) swinging like a reed in a wind, but one would hardly think of such a thing's happening in a stone spire. Does the Bunker-hill Monument bend in the blast like a blade of grass?

You see, of course, that I am talking in a cheap way; perhaps we will have some philosophy by and by;—Let me work out this thin mechanical vein.—I have something more to say about trees. I have brought down this slice of hemlock to show you. Tree blew down in my woods (that were) in 1852. Twelve feet and a half round, fair girth—nine feet, where I got my section, higher up. This is a wedge, going to the centre, of the general shape of a slice of apple-pie in a large and not opulent family. Length about eighteen inches. I have studied the growth of this tree by its rings, and it is curious. Three hundred and forty-two rings. Started, therefore, about 1510. The thickness of the rings tells the rate at which it grew. For five or six years the rate was slow—then rapid for twenty years. A little before the year 1550 it began to grow very slowly, and so continued for about seventy years. In 1620 it took a new start, and grew fast until 1714, then for the most part slowly until 1786, when it started again and grew pretty well and uniformly until within the last dozen years, when it seems to have got on sluggishly.

Look here. Here are some human lives laid down against the periods of its growth, to which they corresponded. This is Shakespeare's. The tree was seven inches in diameter when he was born; ten inches when he died. A little less than ten inches when Milton was born; seventeen when he died. Then comes a long interval, and this thread marks out Johnson's life, during which the tree increased from twenty-two to twenty-nine inches in diameter. Here is the span of Napoleon's career; the tree doesn't seem to have minded it.

I never saw the man yet who was not startled at looking on this section. I have seen many wooden preachers—never one like this. How much more striking would be the calendar counted on the rings of one of those awful trees which were standing when Christ was on earth, and where that brief mortal life is chronicled with the stolid apathy of vegetable being, which remembers all human history as a thing of yesterday in its own dateless existence!

I have something more to say about elms. A relative tells me there is one of great glory in Andover, near Bradford. I have some recollections of the former place, pleasant and other. [I wonder if the old Seminary clock strikes as slowly as it used to. My room-mate thought, when he first came, it was the bell tolling deaths, and people's ages, as they do in the country. He swore (ministers' sons get so familiar with good words that they are apt to handle them carelessly) that the children were

dying by the dozen, of all ages, from one to twelve, and ran off next day in recess, when it began to strike eleven, but was caught before the clock got through striking.] At the foot of "the hill," down in town, is, or was, a tidy old elm, which was said to have been hooped with iron to protect it from Indian tomahawks (*Credat Hahnemannus*), and to have grown round its hoops and buried them in its wood. Of course, this is not the tree my relative means.

Also I have a very pretty letter from Norwich, in Connecticut, telling me of two noble elms which are to be seen in that town. One hundred and twenty-seven feet from bough-end to bough-end! What do you say to that? And gentle ladies beneath it, that love it and celebrate its praises! And that in a town of such supreme, audacious, Alpine loveliness as Norwich! Only the dear people there must learn to call it Norridge, and not be misled by the mere accident of spelling.

Norwich.

Porchmouth.

Cincinnati.

What a sad picture of our civilisation!

I did not speak to you of the great tree on what used to be the Colman farm, in Deerfield, simply because I had not seen it for many years, and did not like to trust my recollection. But I had it in memory, and even noted down, as one of the finest trees in symmetry and beauty I had ever seen. I have received a document, signed by two citizens of a neighbouring town, certified by the postmaster and a selectman, and these again corroborated, reinforced, and sworn to by a member of that extraordinary college-class to which it is the good fortune of my friend the Professor to belong, who, though he has *formerly* been a member of Congress, is, I believe, fully worthy of confidence. The tree "girts" eighteen and a half feet, and spreads over a hundred, and is a real beauty. I hope to meet my friend under its branches yet; if we don't have "youth at the prow," we will have "pleasure at the 'elm."

And just now, again, I have got a letter about some grand willows in Maine, and another about an elm in Wayland, but too late for any thing but thanks.

[And this leads me to say, that I have received a great many communications in prose and verse since I began printing these notes. The last came this very morning, in the shape of a neat and brief poem, from New Orleans. I could not make any of them public, though sometimes requested to do so. Some of them have given me great pleasure, and encouraged me to believe I had friends whose faces I had never seen. If you are pleased with any thing a writer says, and doubt whether to tell him of it, do not hesitate; a pleasant word is a cordial to one, who perhaps thinks he is tiring you, and so becomes tired him-

self. I purr very loud over a good, honest letter that says pretty things to me.]—

Sometimes very young persons send communications which they want forwarded to editors; and these young persons do not always seem to have right conceptions of these same editors, and of the public, and of themselves. Here is a letter I wrote to one of these young folks, but, on the whole, thought it best not to send. It is not fair to single out one for such sharp advice, where there are hundreds that are in need of it.

DEAR SIR,—You seem to be somewhat, but not a great deal, wiser than I was at your age. I don't wish to be understood as saying too much, for I think, without committing myself to any opinion on my present state, that I was not a Solomon at that stage of development.

You long to "leap at a single bound into celebrity." Nothing is so commonplace as to wish to be remarkable. Fame usually comes to those who are thinking about something else—very rarely to those who say to themselves, "Go to, now, let us be a celebrated individual!" The struggle for fame, as such, commonly ends in notoriety; that ladder is easy to climb, but it leads to the pillory which is crowded with fools who could not hold their tongues and rogues who could not hide their tricks.

If you have the consciousness of genius, do something to show it. The world is pretty quick, nowadays, to catch the flavour of true originality; if you write any thing remarkable, the magazines and newspapers will find you out, as the school-boys find out where the ripe apples and pears are. Produce any thing really good, and an intelligent editor will jump at it. Don't flatter yourself that any article of yours is rejected because you are unknown to fame. Nothing pleases an editor more than to get any thing worth having from a new hand. There is always a dearth of really fine articles for a first-rate journal; for, of a hundred pieces received, ninety are at or below the sea-level; some have water enough, but no head; some head enough, but no water; only two or three are from full reservoirs, high up that hill which is so hard to climb.

You may have genius. The contrary is of course probable, but it is not demonstrated. If you have, the world wants you more than you want it. It has not only a desire, but a passion for every spark of genius that shows itself among us; there is not a bull-calf in our national pasture that can bleat a rhyme but it is ten to one, among his friends, and no takers, that he is the real, genuine, no-mistake Osiris.

*Qu'est ce qu'il a fait?* What has he done? That was Napoleon's test. What have you done? Turn up the faces of your picture-cards, my boy! You need not make mouths at the public because it has not accepted you at your own fancy-valuation. Do the prettiest thing you can, and wait your time.

For the verses you send me, I will not say they are hopeless, and I dare not affirm that they show promise. I am not an editor, but I know the standard of some editors. You must not expect to "leap with a single bound" into the society of those whom it is not flattery to call your betters. When "The Pactolian" has paid you for a copy of verses (I can furnish you a list of alliterative signatures, beginning with Annie Aureole and ending with Zoe Zenith)—when "The Rag-bag" has stolen your piece, after carefully scratching your name out—when "The Nut-cracker" has thought you worth shelling, and strung the kernel of your cleverest poem—then, and not till then, you may consider the presumption against you, from the fact of your rhyming tendency, as called in question, and let our friends hear from you, if you think it worth while. You may possibly think me too candid, and even accuse me of incivility; but let me assure you that I am not half so plain-spoken as Nature, nor half so rude as Time. If you prefer the long jolting of public opinion to the gentle touch of friendship, try it like a man. On'y remember this—that if a bushel of potatoes is shaken in a market-cart without springs to it, the small potatoes always get to the bottom.

Believe me, &c., &c.

I always think of verse-writers when I am in this vein; for these are by far the most exacting, eager, self-weighing, restless, querulous, unreasonable literary persons one is like to meet with. Is a young man in the habit of writing verses? Then the presumption is that he is an inferior person. For, look you, there are at least nine chances in ten that he writes *poor* verses. Now the habit of chewing on rhymes without sense and soul to match them is like that of using any other narcotic, at once a proof of feebleness and a debilitating agent. A young man can get rid of the presumption against him afforded by his writing verses, only by convincing us that they are verses worth writing.

All this sounds hard and rough, but, observe, it is not addressed to any individual, and of course does not refer to any reader of these pages. I would always treat any given young person passing through the meteoric showers which rain down on the brief period of adolescence with great tenderness. God forgive us if we ever speak harshly to young creatures on the strength of these ugly truths and so, sooner or later, smite some tender-souled poet or poetess on the lips who might have sung the world into sweet trances, had we not silenced the matin-song in its first low breathings! Just as my heart yearns over the unloved, just so it sorrows for the ungifted who are doomed to the pangs of an undeceived self-estimate. I have always tried to be gentle with the most hopeless cases. My experience, however, has not been encouraging.—

X. Y., æt. 18, a cheaply-got-up youth, with narrow jaws, and

broad, bony, cold, red hands, having been laughed at by the girls in his village, and "got the mitten" (pronounced mittin) two or three times, falls to souling and controlling, and youthing and truthing, in the newspapers. Sends me some strings of verses,—candidates for the Orthopedic Infirmary, all of them,—in which I learn for the millionth time one of the following facts; either that something about a chime is sublime, or that something about time is sublime, or that something about a chime is concerned with time, or that something about a rhyme is sublime, or concerned with time or with a chime. Wishes my opinion of the same, with advice as to his future course.

What shall I do about it? Tell him the whole truth, and send him a ticket of admission to the Institution for Idiots and Feeble-minded Youth? One doesn't like to be cruel,—and yet one hates to lie. Therefore one softens down the ugly central fact of donkeyism,—recommends study of good models, that writing verse should be an incidental occupation only, not interfering with the hoe, the needle, the lapstone, or the ledger,—and, above all, that there should be no hurry in printing what is written. Not the least use in all this. The poetaster who has tasted type is done for. He is like the man who has once been a candidate for the Presidency. He feeds on the madder of his delusion all his days, and his very bones grow red with the glow of his foolish fancy. One of these young brains is like a bunch of India crackers; once touch fire to it, and it is best to keep hands off until it has done popping,—if it ever stops. I have two letters on file; one is a pattern of adulation, the other of impertinence. My reply to the first, containing the best advice I could give, conveyed in courteous language, had brought out the second. There was some sport in this; but Dullness is not commonly a game fish, and only sulks after he is struck. You may set it down as a truth which admits of few exceptions, that those who ask your *opinion* really want your *praise*, and will be contented with nothing less.

There is another kind of application to which editors, or those supposed to have access to them, are liable, and which often proves trying and painful. One is appealed to in behalf of some person in needy circumstances who wishes to make a living by the pen. A manuscript accompanying the letter is offered for publication. It is not commonly brilliant,—too often lamentably deficient. If Rachel's saying is true, that "fortune is the measure of intelligence," then poverty is evidence of limited capacity, which it too frequently proves to be, notwithstanding a noble exception here and there. Now an editor is a person under a contract with the public to furnish them with the best things he can afford for his money. Charity shown by the publication of an inferior article would be like the generosity of Claude Duval and the other gentlemen highwaymen, who pitied the poor so much, they robbed the rich to have the means of relieving them.

Though I am not and never was an editor, I know something of the trials to which they are submitted. They have nothing to do but to develop enormous calluses at every point of contact with authorship. Their business is not a matter of sympathy, but of intellect. They must reject the unfit productions of those whom they long to befriend, because it would be a profligate charity to accept them. One cannot burn his house down to warm the hands even of the fatherless and the widow.—

#### THE PROFESSOR UNDER CHLOROFORM.

You haven't heard about my friend the Professor's first experiment in the use of anæsthetics, have you?

He was mightily pleased with the reception of that poem of his about the chaise. He spoke to me once or twice about another poem of similar character he wanted to read me, which I told him I would listen to and criticise.

One day, after dinner, he came in with his face tied up, looking very red in the cheeks, and heavy about the eyes.—Hy'r'ye?—he said, and made for an arm-chair, in which he placed first his hat and then his person, going smack through the crown of the former, as neatly as they do the trick at the circus. The Professor jumped at the explosion as if he had sat down on one of those small *calthrops* our grandfathers used to sow round in the grass when there were Indians about,—iron stars, each ray a rusty thorn an inch and a half long,—stick through mocassins into feet,—cripple 'em on the spot, and give 'em lockjaw in a day or two.

At the same time he let off one of those big words which lie at the bottom of the best man's vocabulary, but perhaps never turn up in his life,—just as every man's hair *may* stand on end, but in most men it never does.

After he had got calm, he pulled out a sheet or two of manuscript, together with a smaller scrap, on which, as he said, he had just been writing an introduction or prelude to the main performance. A certain suspicion had come into my mind that the Professor was not quite right, which was confirmed by the way he talked; but I let him begin. This is the way he read it:

#### PRELUDE.

I'm the fellah that tole one day  
The tale of the won'erful one-hoss shay.  
Wan' to hear another? Say.—  
Funny, wasn' it? Made *me* laugh,—  
I'm too modest, I am, by half,—  
Made me laugh 's *though I sh'd split*,—  
Cahn' a fellah like fellah's own wit?—  
Fellahs keep sayin', "Well, now, that's nice :  
Did it once, but cahn' do it twice."—  
Dõn' you b'lieve the 'z no more fat;  
Lots in the kitch'n 'z good 'z that.

Fus-'rate throw, 'n' no mistake,—  
 Han' us the props for another shake;  
 Know I'll try, 'n' guess I'll win;  
 Here sh' goes for hit'm ag'in!

Here I thought it necessary to interpose.—Professor,—I said,—you are inebriated. The style of what you call your “Prelude” shows that it was written under cerebral excitement. Your articulation is confused. You have told me three times in succession, in exactly the same words, that I was the only true friend you had in the world that you would unbutton your heart to. You smell distinctly and decidedly of spirits.—I spoke, and paused;—tender, but firm.

Two large tears orbbed themselves beneath the Professor's lids,—in obedience to the principle of gravitation celebrated in that delicious bit of bladdery bathos, “The very law that moulds a tear,” with which the *Edinburgh Review* attempted to put down Master George Gordon when that young man was foolishly trying to make himself conspicuous.

One of these tears peeped over the edge of the lid until it lost its balance,—slid an inch and waited for reinforcements,—swelled again,—rolled down a little further,—stopped,—moved on,—and at last fell on the back of the Professor's hand. He held it up for me to look at, and lifted his eyes, brimful, till they met mine.

I couldn't stand it,—I always break down when folks cry in my face,—so I hugged him, and said he was a dear old boy, and asked him kindly what was the matter with him, and what made him smell so dreadfully strong of spirits.

Upset his alcohol lamp,—he said,—and spilt the alcohol on his legs. That was it.—But what had he been doing to get his head into such a state?—had he really committed an excess? What was the matter?—Then it came out that he had been taking chloroform to have a tooth out, which had left him in a very queer state, in which he had written the “Prelude” given above, and under the influence of which he evidently was still.

I took the manuscript from his hands and read the following continuation of the lines he had begun to read me, while he made up for two or three nights' lost sleep as he best might.

PARSON TURELL'S LEGACY:  
 OR, THE PRESIDENT'S OLD ARM-CHAIR.  
 A MATHEMATICAL STORY.

Facts respecting an old arm-chair.  
 At Cambridge. Is kept in the College there.  
 Seems but little the worse for wear.  
 That's remarkable when I say  
 It was old in President Holyoke's day  
 (One of his boys, perhaps you know  
 Died, *at one hundred*, years ago.)  
 He took lodging for rain or shine  
 Under green bed-clothes in '69.



Know Old Cambridge? Hope you do.—  
 Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.  
 (Born in a house with a gambrel roof,—  
 Standing still, if you must have proof.—  
 "Gambrel?—Gambrel?"—Let me beg  
 You'll look at a horse's hinder leg,—  
 First great angle above the hoof,—  
 That's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.)  
 —Nicest place that ever was seen,—  
 Colleges red and Common green,  
 Sidewalks brownish with trees between,  
 Sweetest spot beneath the skies  
 When the canker-worms don't rise,—  
 When the dust, that sometimes flies  
 Into your mouth and ears and eyes,  
 In a quiet slumber lies,  
 Not in the shape of unbaked pies  
 Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbour it seems to be,  
 Facing the flow of a boundless sea.  
 Rows of gray old Tutors stand  
 Ranged like rocks above the sand;  
 Rolling beneath them, soft and green,  
 Breaks the tide of bright sixteen,—  
 One wave, two waves, three waves, four,  
 Sliding up the sparkling floor;  
 Then it ebbs to flow no more,  
 Wandering off from shore to shore  
 With its freight of golden ore!  
 —Pleasant place for boys to play;—  
 Better keep your girls away;  
 Hearts get rolled as pebbles do  
 Which countless fingering waves pursue,  
 And every classic beach is strown  
 With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red stone.

But this is neither here nor there;—  
 I'm talking about an old arm-chair.  
 You've heard, no doubt, of PARSON TURELL—  
 Over at Medford he used to dwell;  
 Married one of the Mathers' folk;  
 Got with his wife a chair of oak,—  
 Funny old chair, with seat like wedge,  
 Sharp behind and broad front edge,—  
 One of the oddest of human things,  
 Turned all over with knobs and rings,—  
 But heavy, and wide, and deep, and grand,—  
 Fit for the worthies of the land,—  
 Chief-Justice Sewall a cause to try in,  
 Or Cotton Mather to sit—and lie—in.  
 —Parson Turell bequeathed the same  
 To a certain student,—SMITH by name;  
 These were the terms, as we are told:  
 "Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and holde;  
 When he doth graduate, then to passe  
 To ye oldest Youth in ye Senior Classe:  
 On Payment of"—(naming a certain sum)—  
 "By him to whom ye Chaire shall come;

He to ye oldest Senior next,  
 And soe forever"—(thus runs the text).—  
 "But one Crown lesse then he gave to claime,  
 That being his Debfte for use of same."

*Smith* transferred it to one of the BROWNS,  
 And took his money,—five silver crowns.  
*Brown* delivered it up to MOORE,  
 Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.  
*Moore* made over the chair to LEE;  
 Who gave him crowns of silver three.  
*Lee* conveyed it unto DREW,  
 And now the payment, of course, was two.  
*Drew* gave up the chair to DUNN,—  
 All he got, as you see, was one.  
*Dunn* released the chair to Hall,  
 And got by the bargain no crown at all.

And now it passed to a second BROWN,  
 Who took it, and likewise *claimed a crown*.  
 When *Brown* conveyed it unto WARE,  
 Having had one crown, to make it fair,  
 He paid him two crowns to take the chair;  
 And *Ware*, being honest (as all Wares be),  
 He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.  
 Four got ROBINSON; five got DIX;  
 JOHNSON *primus* demanded six;  
 And so the sum kept gathering still  
 Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill.—  
 When paper money became so cheap,  
 Folks wouldn't count it, but said "a heap,"  
 A certain RICHARDS, the books declare,—  
 (A.M. in '90? I've looked with care  
 Through the Triennial,—*name not there*),  
 This person, Richards, was offered then  
 Eight score pounds, but would have ten;  
 Nine, I think, was the sum he took,—  
 Not quite certain,—but see the book.—  
 By and by the wars were still,  
 But nothing had altered the Parson's will.  
 The old arm-chair was solid yet,  
 But saddled with such a monstrous debt!  
 Things grew quite too bad to bear,  
 Paying such sums to get rid of the chair!  
 But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,  
 And there was the will in black and white,  
 Plain enough for a child to spell.  
 What should be done no man could tell,  
 For the chair was a kind of nightmare curse  
 And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,  
 They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.  
 The Governor came, with his Light-horse Troop  
 And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-hoop;  
 Halberds glittered and colours flew,  
 French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,  
 The yellow fives whistled between their teeth,  
 And the bumble-bee drums boomed beneath,

— Let us not be in unseemly haste. I shall call her the schoolmistress still; some of you love her under that name.—

When it became known among the boarders that two of their number had joined hands to walk down the long path of life side by side, there was, as you may suppose, no small sensation. I confess I pitied our landlady. It took her all of a sudden,—she said. Had not known that we was keepin company, and never mistrusted anything partic'lar. Ma'am was right to better herself. Didn't look very rugged to take care of a family, but could get hired haäp, she calc'lated.—The great maternal instinct came crowding up in her soul just then, and her eyes wandered until they settled on her daughter.—

No, poor, dear woman,—that could not have been. But I am dropping one of my internal tears for you, with this pleasant smile on my face all the time.

The great mystery of God's providence is the permitted crushing out of flowering instincts. Life is maintained by the respiration of oxygen and of sentiments. In the long catalogue of scientific cruelties there is hardly anything quite so painful to think of as that experiment of putting an animal under the bell of an air-pump and exhausting the air from it. [I never saw the accursed trick performed. *Laus Deo!*] There comes a time when the souls of human beings, women, perhaps, more even than men, begin to faint for the atmosphere of the affections they were made to breathe. Then it is that Society places its transparent bell-glass over the young woman who is to be the subject of one of its fatal experiments. The element by which only the heart lives is sucked out of her crystalline prison. Watch her through its transparent walls;—her bosom is heaving; but it is in a vacuum. Death is no riddle, compared to this. I remember a poor girl's story in the *Book of Martyrs*. The "dry-pan and the gradual fire" were the images that frightened her most. How many have withered and wasted under as slow a torment in the walls of that larger Inquisition which we call Civilisation!

Yes, my surface-thought laughs at you, you foolish, plain, over-dressed, mincing, cheaply-organised, self-saturated young person, whoever you may be, now reading this,—little thinking you are what I describe, and in blissful unconsciousness that you are destined to the lingering asphyxia of soul which is the lot of such multitudes worthier than yourself. But it is only my surface-thought which laughs. For that great procession of the UNLOVED, who not only wear the crown of thorns, but must hide it under the locks of brown or gray,—under the snowy cap, under the chilling turban,—hide it even from themselves,—perhaps never know they wear it, though it kills them,—there is no depth of tenderness in my nature that Pity has not sounded. Somewhere,—somewhere,—love is in store for them,—the universe must not be allowed to fool them so cruelly. What infinite

pathos in the small, half-unconscious artifices by which unattractive young persons seek to recommend themselves to the favour of those towards whom our dear sisters, the unloved, like the rest, are impelled by their God-given instincts!

Read what the singing-women—one to ten thousand of the suffering women—tell us, and think of the griefs that die unspoken! Nature is in earnest when she makes a woman; and there are women enough lying in the next churchyard with very commonplace blue slate-stones at their head and feet, for whom it was just as true that “all sounds of life assumed one tone of love,” as for Letitia Landon, of whom Elizabeth Browning said it; but she could give words to her grief, and they could not.—Will you hear a few stanzas of mine?

### THE VOICELESS.

We count the broken lyres that rest  
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,—  
But o'er their silent sister's breast  
The wild flowers who will stoop to number?  
A few can touch the magic string,  
And noisy Fame is proud to win them;—  
Alas for those that never sing,  
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone,  
Whose song has told their hearts' sad story,—  
Weep for the voiceless, who have known  
The cross without the crown of glory!  
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep  
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,  
But where the glistening night-dews weep  
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

Oh, hearts that break and give no sign  
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,  
Till death pours out his cordial wine,  
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses,—  
If singing breath or echoing chord  
To every hidden pang were given,  
What endless melodies were poured,  
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

I hope that our landlady's daughter is not so badly off, after all. That young man from another city who made the remark which you remember about Boston State-house and Boston folks, has appeared at our table repeatedly of late, and has seemed to me rather attentive to this young lady. Only last evening I saw him leaning over her while she was playing the accordion,—indeed, I undertook to join them in a song, and got as far as “Come rest in this boo-oo,” when, my voice getting tremulous, I turned off, as one steps out of a procession, and left the basso and soprano to finish it. I see no reason why this young woman should not be a very proper match for a man that laughs about Boston State-house. He can't be very particular.

The young fellow whom I have so often mentioned was a

little free in his remarks, but very good-natured.—Sorry to have you go,—he said.—Schoolma'am made a mistake not to wait for me. Haven't taken anything but mournin' fruit at breakfast since I heard of it.—*Mourning fruit*,—said I,—what's that?—Huckleberries and blackberries,—said he;—couldn't eat in colours, raspberries, currants, and such, after a solemn thing like this happening.—The conceit seemed to please the young fellow. If you will believe it, when we came down to breakfast the next morning, he had carried it out as follows. You know those odious little "saas-plates" that figure so largely at boarding-houses, and especially at taverns, into which a strenuous attendant female trowels little dabs, sombre of tint and heterogeneous of composition, which it makes you feel home-sick to look at, and into which you poke the elastic coppery teaspoon with the air of a cat dipping her foot into a wash-tub—(not that I mean to say anything against them, for when they are of tinted porcelain, or starry, many-faceted crystal, and hold clean bright berries, or pale virgin honey, or "lucent syrups tinct with cinnamon," and the teaspoon is of white silver, with the Tower-stamp, solid, but not brutally heavy,—as people in the green stage of millionism will have them,—I can dally with their amber semi-fluids or glossy spherules without a shiver),—you know these small, deep dishes, I say. When we came down the next morning, each of these (two only excepted) was covered with a broad leaf. On lifting this, each boarder found a small heap of solemn black huckleberries. But one of those plates held red currants, and was covered with a red rose; the other held white currants, and was covered with a white rose. There was a laugh at this at first, and then a short silence, and I noticed that her lip trembled, and the old gentleman opposite was in trouble to get at his bandanna handkerchief.—

"What was the use in waiting? We should be too late for Switzerland, that season, if we waited much longer."—The hand I held trembled in mine, and the eyes fell meekly, as Esther bowed herself before the feet of Ahasuerus.—She had been reading that chapter, for she looked up,—if there was a film of moisture over her eyes, there was also the faintest shadow of a distant smile skirting her lips, but not enough to accent the dimples,—and said, in her pretty, still way,—“If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes”——

I don't remember what King Ahasuerus did or said when Esther got just to that point of her soft, humble words—but I know what I did. That quotation from Scripture was cut short, any how. We came to a compromise on the great question, and the time was settled for the last day of summer.

In the meantime, I talked on with our boarders, much as usual, as you may see by what I have reported. I must say, I was pleased with a certain tenderness they all showed toward

us, after the first excitement of the news was over. It came out in trivial matters—but each one, in his or her way, manifested kindness. Our landlady, for instance, when we had chickens, sent the *liver* instead of the *gizzard*, with the wing, for ~~the~~ schoolmistress. This was not an accident : the two are ~~never~~ mistaken, though some landladies *appear* as if they did not know the difference. The whole of the company were even more respectfully attentive to my remarks than usual. There was no idle punning, and very little winking, on the part of that lively young gentleman who, as the reader may remember, occasionally interposed some playful question or remark, which could hardly be considered relevant—except when the least allusion was made to matrimony, when he would look at the landlady's daughter, and wink with both sides of his face, until she would ask what he was pokin' his fun at her for, and if he wasn't ashamed of himself. In fact, they all behaved very handsomely, so that I really felt sorry at the thought of leaving my boarding-house.

I suppose you think that, because I lived at a plain widow-woman's plain table, I was of course more or less infirm in point of worldly fortune. You may not be sorry to learn that, though not what *great merchants* call very rich, I was comfortable—comfortable—so that most of those moderate luxuries I described in my verses on *Contentment*—most of them, I say, were within our reach, if we chose to have them. But I found out that the schoolmistress had a vein of charity about her, which had hitherto been worked on a small silver and copper basis, which made her think less, perhaps, of luxuries than even I did—modestly as I have expressed my wishes.

It is a rather pleasant thing to tell a poor young woman, whom one has contrived to win without showing his rent-roll, that she has found what the world values so highly, in following the lead of her affections. That was an enjoyment I was now ready for.

I began abruptly :—Do you know that you are a rich young person?

I know that I am very rich, she said. Heaven has given me more than I ever asked ; for I had not thought love was ever meant for me.

It was a woman's confession, and her voice fell to a whisper as it threaded the last words.

I don't mean that, I said, you blessed little saint and seraph !—if there's an angel missing in the New Jerusalem, inquire for her at this boarding-house !—I don't mean that ! I mean that I—that is you—am—are—confound it—I mean that you'll be what most people call a lady of fortune. And I looked full in her eyes for the effect of the announcement.

There wasn't any. She said she was thankful that I had what would save me from drudgery, and that some other time I

should tell her about it. I never made a greater failure in an attempt to produce a sensation.

So the last day of summer came. It was our choice to go to the church, but we had a kind of reception at the boarding-house. The presents were all arranged, and among them none gave more pleasure than the modest tributes of our fellow-boarders—for there was not one, I believe, who did not send something. The landlady would insist on making an elegant bride-cake, with her own hands; to which Master Benjamin Franklin wished to add certain embellishments out of his private funds—namely, a Cupid in a mouse-trap, done in white sugar, and two miniature flags with the stars and stripes, which had a very pleasing effect, I assure you. The landlady's daughter sent a richly-bound copy of Tupper's *Poems*. On a blank leaf was the following, written in a very delicate and careful hand:—

Presented to . . . by . . . :

On the eve ere her union in holy matrimony.

May sunshine ever beam o'er her!

Even the poor relative thought she must do something, and sent a copy of *The Whole Duty of Man*, bound in very attractive variegated sheepskin, the edges nicely marbled. From the divinity-student came the loveliest English edition of Keble's *Christian Year*. I opened it, when it came to the *Fourth Sunday in Lent*, and read that angelic poem, sweeter than any thing I can remember since Xavier's "My God, I love Thee." I am not a Churchman—I don't believe in planting oaks in flower-pots, but such a poem as "The Rosebud" makes one's heart a proselyte to the culture it grows from. Talk about it as much as you like—one's breeding shows itself nowhere more than in his religion. A man should be a gentleman in his hymns and prayers; the fondness for "scenes," among vulgar saints, contrasts so meanly with that—

"God only and good angels look  
Behind the blissful scene"—

and that other—

"He could not trust his melting soul  
But in his Maker's sight"—

that I hope some of them will see this, and read the poem, and profit by it.

My laughing and winking young friend undertook to procure and arrange the flowers for the table, and did it with immense zeal. I never saw him look happier than when he came in, his hat saucily on one side and a cheroot in his mouth, with a huge bunch of tea-roses, which he said were for "Madam."

One of the last things that came was an old square box, smelling of camphor, tied and sealed. It bore, in faded ink, the marks, "Calcutta, 1805." On opening it, we found a white cashmere shawl, with a very brief note from the dear old gentleman oppo-



site, saying that he had kept this some years, thinking he might want it, and many more, not knowing what to do with it—that he had never seen it unfolded since he was a young supercargo—and now, if she would spread it on her shoulders, it would make him feel young to look at it.

Poor Bridget, or Biddy, our red-armed maid-of-all-work! What must she do but buy a small copper breast-pin and put it under “Schoolma’am’s” plate that morning, at breakfast? And Schoolma’am would wear it, though I made her cover it, as well as I could, with a tea-rose.

It was my last breakfast as a boarder, and I could not leave them in utter silence.

Good by, I said, my dear friends, one and all of you! I have been long with you, and I find it hard parting. I have to thank you for a thousand courtesies, and above all for the patience and indulgence with which you have listened to me when I have tried to instruct or amuse you. My friend the Professor (who, as well as my friend the Poet, is unavoidably absent on this interesting occasion) has given me reason to suppose that he would occupy my empty chair about the first of January next. If he comes among you, be kind to him, as you have been to me. May the Lord bless you all!—And we shook hands all round the table.

Half an hour afterwards the breakfast things and the cloth were gone. I looked up and down the length of the bare boards over which I had so often uttered my sentiments and experiences—and—yes, I am a man, like another.

All sadness vanished, as, in the midst of these old friends of mine, whom you know, and others a little more up in the world, perhaps, to whom I have not introduced you, I took the schoolmistress before the altar from the hands of the old gentleman who used to sit opposite, and who would insist on giving her away.

And now we two are walking the long path in peace together. The “schoolmistress” finds her skill in teaching called for again, without going abroad to seek little scholars. Those visions of mine have all come true.

I hope you all love me none the less for any thing I have told you. Farewell!

THE END.



**THE**  
**Professor at the Breakfast-Table**



# THE PROFESSOR

## AT

# THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

*What he Said, what he Heard, and what he Saw.*

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### I.

I INTENDED to have signalized my first appearance by a certain large statement, which I flatter myself is the nearest approach to a universal formula of life yet promulgated at this breakfast-table. It would have had a grand effect. For this purpose I fixed my eyes on a certain divinity student, with the intention of exchanging a few phrases, and then forcing my court card, namely, *The great end of being*.—I will thank you for the sugar, I said—Man is a dependent creature.

It is a small favour to ask, said the divinity student,—and passed the sugar to me.

—Life is a great bundle of little things, I said.

The divinity student smiled, as if that was the concluding epigram of the sugar question.

You smile, I said. Perhaps life seems to you a little bundle of great things?

The divinity student started a laugh, but suddenly reined it back with a pull, as one throws a horse on his haunches.—Life is a great bundle of great things, he said.

(*Now then!*) The great end of being, after all, is——

Hold on! said my neighbour, a young fellow whose name seems to be John, and nothing else—for that is what they all call him—hold on! the Sculpin is go'n' to say somethin'.

Now the Sculpin (*Cottus Virginianus*) is a little water beast which pretends to consider itself a fish, and, under that pretext, hangs about the piles upon which West Boston Bridge is built, swallowing the bait and hook intended for flounders. On being drawn from the water, it exposes an immense head, a dimin-

The female boarder in black attire looked so puzzled, and, in fact, "all abroad," after the delivery of this "counter" of mine, that I left her to recover her wits, and went on with the conversation, which I was beginning to get pretty well in hand.

But in the meantime I kept my eye on the female boarder to see what effect I had produced. First, she was a little stunned at having her argument knocked over. Secondly, she was a little shocked at the tremendous character of the triple matrimonial suggestion. Thirdly.—I don't like to say what I thought. Something seemed to have pleased her fancy. Whether it was, that, if trigamy should come into fashion, there would be three times as many chances to enjoy the luxury of saying "No!" is more than I can tell you. I may as well mention that B. F. came to me after breakfast to borrow the pamphlet for "a lady,"—one of the boarders, he said,—looking as if he had a secret he wished to be relieved of.

—I continued.—If a human soul is necessarily to be trained up in the faith of those from whom it inherits its body, why, there is the end of all reason... If, sooner or later, every soul is to look for truth with its own eyes, the first thing is to recognize that no presumption in favour of any particular belief arises from the fact of our inheriting it. Otherwise you would not give the Mahometan a fair chance to become a convert to a better religion.

The second thing would be to depolarize every fixed religious idea in the mind by changing the word which stands for it.

—I don't know what you mean by "depolarizing" an idea, said the divinity-student.

I will tell you, I said.—When a given symbol which represents a thought has lain for a certain length of time in the mind, it undergoes a change like that which rest in a certain position gives to iron. It becomes magnetic in its relations,—it is traversed by strange forces which did not belong to it. The word, and consequently the idea it represents, is *polarized*.

The religious currency of mankind, in thought, in speech, and in print, consists entirely of polarized words. Borrow one of these from another language and religion, and you will find it leaves all its magnetism behind it. Take that famous word, O'm, of the Hindoo mythology. Even a priest cannot pronounce it without sin; and a holy Pundit would shut his ears and run away from you in horror, if you should say it aloud. What do you care for O'm? If you wanted to get the Pundit to look at his religion fairly, you must first depolarize this and all similar words for him. The argument for and against new translations of the Bible really turns on this. Scepticism is afraid to trust its truths in depolarized words, and so cries out against a new translation. I think, myself, if every idea our Book con-

tains could be shelled out of its old symbol and put into a new, clean, unmagnetic word, we should have some chance of reading it as philosophers, or wisdom-lovers, ought to read it—which we do not and cannot now, any more than a Hindoo can read the “Gayatri” as a fair man and lover of truth should do. When society has once fairly dissolved the New Testament, which it never has done yet, it will perhaps crystallize it over again in new forms of language.

—“I didn’t know you was a settled minister over this parish,” said the young fellow near me.

A sermon by a lay preacher may be worth listening to, I replied, calmly.—It gives the *parallax* of thought and feeling as they appear to the observers from two different points of view. If you wish to get the distance of a heavenly body, you know that you must take two observations from remote points of the earth’s orbit,—in midsummer and midwinter, for instance. To get the parallax of heavenly truths, you must take an observation from the position of the laity as well as of the clergy. Teachers and students of theology get a certain look, certain conventional tones of voice, a clerical gait, a professional neck-cloth, and habits of mind as professional as their externals. They are scholarly men and read Bacon, and know well enough what the “idols of the tribe” are. Of course they have their false gods, as all men that follow one exclusive calling are prone to do.—The clergy have played the part of the fly-wheel in our modern civilization. They have never suffered it to stop. They have often carried on its movement, when other moving powers have failed, by the momentum stored in their vast body. Sometimes, too, they have kept it back by their *vis inertia* when its wheels were like to grind the bones of some old canonized error into fertilizers for the soil that yields the bread of life. But the mainspring of the world’s onward religious movement is not in them, nor in any one body of men, let me tell you. It is the people that makes the clergy, and not the clergy that makes the people. Of course, the profession reacts on its source with variable energy.—But there never was a guild of dealers or a company of craftsmen that did not need sharp looking after.

Our old friend, Dr. Holyoke, whom we gave the dinner to some time since, must have known many people that saw the great bonfire in Harvard College yard.

—Bonfire? shrieked the little man. The bonfire when Robert Calef’s book was burned?

The same, I said,—when Robert Calef the Boston merchant’s book was burned in the yard of Harvard College, by order of Increase Mather, President of the College and Minister of the Gospel. You remember the old witchcraft revival of ’92, and how stout Master Robert Calef, trader, of Boston, had the pluck



to tell the ministers and judges what a set of fools and worse than fools they were——

Remember it? said the little man. I don't think I shall forget it, as long as I can stretch this forefinger to point with, and see what it wears.—There was a ring on it.

May I look at it? I said.

Where it is, said the little man ;—it will never come off, till it falls off from the bone, in the darkness and in the dust.

He pushed the high chair on which he sat slightly back from the table, and dropped himself, standing, to the floor,—his head being only a little above the level of the table as he stood. With pain and labour, lifting one foot over the other, as a drummer handles his sticks, he took a few steps from his place,—his motions and the dead beat of the misshapen boots announcing to my practised eye and ear the malformation which is called in learned language *talipes varus*, or inverted club-foot.

Stop ! stop ! I said,—let me come to you.

The little man, hobbled back, and lifted himself by the left arm, with an ease approaching to grace which surprised me, into his high chair. I walked to his side, and he stretched out the forefinger of his right hand with the ring upon it. The ring had been put on long ago, and could not pass the misshapen joint. It was one of those funeral rings which used to be given to relatives and friends after the decease of persons of any note or importance. Beneath a round bit of glass was a death's-head. Engraved on one side of this, "L. B. Æt. 22,"—on the other, "Ob. 1692."

My grandmother's grandmother, said the little man.—Hanged for a witch. It doesn't seem a great while ago. I knew my grandmother, and loved her. Her mother was daughter to the witch that Chief Justice Sewall hanged and Cotton Mather delivered over to the Devil.—That was Salem, though, and not Boston, No, not Boston. Robert Calef, the Boston merchant, it was that blew them all to——

Never mind where he blew them to, I said ; for the little man was getting red in the face, and I didn't know what might come next.

This episode broke me up, as the jockeys say, out of my square conversational trot ; but I settled down to it again.

——A man that knows men, in the street, at their work, human nature in its shirt-sleeves—who makes bargains with deacons, instead of talking over texts with them—a man who has found out that there are plenty of praying rogues and swearing saints in the world—above all, who has found out, by living into the pith and core of life, that all of the Deity which can be folded up between the sheets of any human book is to the Deity of the

firmament, of the strata, of the hot aortic flood of throbbing human life, of this infinite, instantaneous consciousness in which the soul's being consists—an incandescent point in the filament connecting the negative pole of a past eternity with the positive pole of an eternity that is to come—that all of the Deity which any human book can hold is to this larger Deity of the working battery of the universe only as the films of a book of gold-leaf are to the broad seams and curdled lumps of ore that lie in unsunned mines and virgin placers,—Oh!—I was saying that a man who lives out-of-doors, among live people gets some things into his head he might not find in the index of his “Body of Divinity.”

I tell you what,—the idea of the professions digging a moat round their close corporations, like that Japanese one at Jeddo, which you could put Park Street Church on the bottom of and look over the vane from its side, and try to stretch another such spire across it without spanning the chasm,—that idea, I say, is pretty nearly worn out. Now when a civilization or a civilized custom falls into senile *dementia*, there is commonly a judgment ripe for it, and it comes as plagues come, from a breath,—as fire comes, from a spark.

Here, look at medicine. Big wigs, gold-headed canes, Latin prescriptions, shops full of abominations, recipes a yard long, “curing” patients by drugging as sailors bring a wind by whistling, selling lies at a guinea apiece,—a routine, in short, of giving unfortunate sick people a mess of things either too odious to swallow or too acrid to hold, or, if that were possible, both at once.

—You don't know what I mean, indignant and not unintelligent country practitioner? Then you don't know the history of medicine,—and that is not my fault. But don't expose yourself by any outbreak of eloquence ; for, by the mortar in which Anaxarchus was pounded, I did not bring home Schenckius and Forestus and Hildanus, and all the old folios in calf and vellum I will show you, to be bullied by the proprietor of a “Wood and Bache,” and a shelf of peppered sheepskin reprints by Philadelphia Editors. Besides, many of the profession and I know a little something of each other, and you don't think I'm such a simpleton as to lose their good opinion by saying what the better heads among them would condemn as unfair and untrue? Now mark how the great plague came on the generation of drugging doctors, and in what form it fell.

A scheming drug-vender, (inventive genius,) an utterly untrustworthy and incompetent observer, (profound searcher of Nature,) a shallow dabbler in erudition, (sagacious scholar,) started the monstrous fiction, (founded the immortal system,) of

**Homœopathy.** I am very fair, you see,—you can help yourself to either of these sets of phrases.

All the reason in the world would not have had so rapid and general an effect on the public mind to disabuse it of the idea that a drug is a good thing in itself, instead of being, as it is, a bad thing, as was produced by the trick (system) of this German charlatan (theorist). Not that the wiser part of the profession needed him to teach them ; but the routinists and their employers, the “general practitioners,” who lived by selling pills and mixtures, and their drug-consuming customers, had to recognize that people could get well, unpoisoned. These dumb cattle would not learn it of themselves, and so the murrain of Homœopathy fell on them.

You don't know what plague has fallen on the practitioners of theology? I will tell you, then. It is SPIRITUALISM. While some are crying out against it as a delusion of the devil, and some are laughing at it as an hysteric folly, and some are getting angry with it as a mere trick of interested or mischievous persons, spiritualism is quietly undermining the traditional ideas of the future state which have been and are still accepted,—not merely in those who believe in it, but in the general sentiment of the community, to a larger extent than most good people seem to be aware of. It needn't be true, to do this, any more than Homœopathy need, to do its work. The spiritualists have some pretty strong instincts to pry over, which no doubt have been roughly handled by theologians at different times. And the Nemesis of the pulpit comes, in a shape it little thought of, beginning with the snap of a toe-joint, and ending with such a crack of old beliefs that the roar of it is heard in all the ministers' studies of Christendom ! Sir, you cannot have people of cultivation, of pure character, sensible enough in common things, large-hearted women, grave judges, shrewd business-men, men of science, professing to be in communication with the spiritual world and keeping up constant intercourse with it, without its gradually reacting on the whole conception of that other life. It is the folly of the world constantly which confounds its wisdom. Not only out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, but out of the mouths of fools and cheats, we may often get our truest lessons. For the fool's judgment is a dog-vane that turns with a breath, and the cheat watches the clouds and sets his weathercock by them,—so that one shall often see by their pointing which way the winds of heaven are blowing, when the slow-wheeling arrows and feathers of what we call the Temples of Wisdom are turning to all points of the compass.

—Amen ! said the young fellow called John. Ten minutes by the watch. Those that are unanimous will please to signify by holding up their left foot !

I looked this young man steadily in the face for about thirty seconds. His countenance was as calm as that of a reposing infant. I think it was simplicity, rather than mischief, with perhaps a youthful playfulness, that led him to this outbreak. I have often noticed that even quiet horses, on a sharp November morning, when their coats are just beginning to get the winter roughness, will give little sportive demi-kicks, with slight sudden elevation of the subsequent region of the body, and a sharp short whinny,—by no means intending to put their heels through the dasher, or to address the driver rudely, but feeling, to use a familiar word, frisky. This, I think, is the physiological condition of the young person, John. I noticed, however, what I should call a *palpebral spasm*, affecting the eyelid and muscles of one side, which, if it were intended for the facial gesture called a wink, might lead me to suspect a disposition to be satirical on his part.

—Resuming the conversation, I remarked,—I am *ex officio*, as a professor, a Conservative. For I don't know any fruit that clings to its tree so faithfully, not even a "froze-'n'-thaw" winter-apple, as a professor to the bough of which his chair is made. You can't shake him off. Hence by a chain of induction I need not unwind, he tends to Conservatism generally.

But then, you know, if you are sailing the Atlantic, and all at once find yourself in a current, and the sea covered with weeds, and drop your Fahrenheit over the side and find it eight or ten degrees higher than in the ocean generally, there is no use in flying in the face of facts and swearing there is no such thing as a gulf-stream, when you are in it.

You can't keep gas in a bladder, and you can't keep knowledge tight in a profession. Hydrogen will leak out, and air will leak in, through india-rubber; and special knowledge will leak out, and general knowledge will leak in, though a profession were covered with twenty thicknesses of sheepskin diplomas. By Jove, sir, till common sense is well mixed up with medicine, and common manhood with theology, and common honesty with law, ~~we the people~~, sir, some of us with nut-crackers, and some of us with trip-hammers, and some of us with pile-drivers, and some of us coming with a whish! like air-stones out of a lunar volcano, will crash down on the lumps of nonsense in all of them till we have made powder of them like Aaron's calf!

If to be a Conservative is to let all the drains of thought choke up and keep all the soul's windows down,—to shut out the sun from the east and the wind from the west,—to let the rats run free in the cellar, and the moths feed their fill in the chambers, and the spiders weave their lace before the mirrors, till the soul's typhus is bred out of our neglect, and we begin to snore in its coma or rave in its delirium,—I, sir, am a *bonnet*-

*rouge*, a red cap of the barricades, my friends, rather than a Conservative.

—Were you born in Boston, sir? said the little man, looking eager and excited.

I was not, I replied.

It's a pity, it's a pity, said the little man; it's the place to be born in. But if you can't fix it so as to be born here, you can come and live here. Old Ben Franklin, the father of American science and the American Union, wasn't ashamed to be born here. Jim Otis, the father of American Independence, bothered about in the Cape Cod marshes awhile, but he came to Boston as soon as he got big enough. Joe Warren, the first bloody ruffled-shirt of the Revolution, was as good as born here. Parson Channing strolled along this way from Newport, and stayed here. Pity old Sam Hopkins hadn't come too; we'd have made a man of him, poor, dear, good old Christian heathen! There he lies, as peaceful as a young baby, in the old burying-ground! I've stood on the slab many a time. Meant well,—meant well. Juggernaut. Parson Channing put a little oil on one linch-pin, and slipped it out so softly, the first thing they knew about it was the wheel of that side was down. T'other fellow's at work now; but he makes more noise about it. When the linch-pin comes out on his side, there'll be a jerk, I tell you! Some think it will spoil the old cart, and they pretend to say there are valuable things in it which may get hurt. Hope not, hope not. But this is the great Macadamizing place, always cracking up something.

Cracking up Boston folks, said the gentleman with the *diamond*-pin, whom, for convenience' sake, I shall hereafter call the *Koh-i-noor*.

The little man turned round mechanically towards him, as Maelzel's Turk used to turn, carrying his head slowly and horizontally, as if it went by cog-wheels. Cracking up all sorts of things, native and foreign vermin included, said the little man.

This remark was thought by some of us to have a hidden personal application, and to afford a fair opening for a lively rejoinder, if the *Koh-i-noor* had been so disposed. The little man uttered it with the distinct wooden calmness with which the ingenious Turk used to exclaim, *E-chec!* so that it *must* have been heard. The party supposed to be interested in the remark was, however, carrying a large knife-blade full of something to his mouth just then, which, no doubt, interfered with the reply he would have made.

—My friend who used to board here was accustomed sometimes, in a pleasant way, to call himself the *Autocrat* of the table, meaning, I suppose, that he had it all his own way among

the boarders. I think our small boarder here is like to prove a refractory subject, if I undertake to use the sceptre my friend meant to bequeathe me, too magisterially. I won't deny that sometimes, on rare occasions, when I have been in company with gentlemen who *preferred* listening, I have been guilty of the same kind of usurpation which my friend openly justified. But I maintain, that I, the Professor, am a good listener. If a man can tell me a fact which subtends an appreciable angle in the horizon of thought, I am as receptive as the contribution-box in the congregation of coloured brethren. If, when I am exposing my intellectual dry-goods, a man will begin a good story, I will have them all in, and my shutters up, before he has got to the fifth "says he," and listen like a three-years' child, as the author of the "Old Sailor" says. I had rather hear one of those grand elemental laughs from either of our two Georges (fictitious names, sir or madam), or listen to one of those old playbills of our college days, in which "Tom and Jerry" ("Thomas and Jeremiah," as the old Greek Professor was said to call it,) was announced to be brought on the stage with the whole force of the faculty, read by our Frederick (no such person, of course), than say the best things I might by any chance find myself capable of saying. Of course, if I come across a real thinker, a suggestive, acute, illuminating, informing talker, I enjoy the luxury of sitting still for awhile as much as another.

Nobody talks much that doesn't say unwise things, things he did not mean to say; as no person plays much without striking a false note sometimes. Talk, to me, is only spading up the ground for crops of thought. I can't answer for what will turn up. If I could, it wouldn't be talking, but "speaking my piece." Better, I think, the hearty abandonment of one's self to the suggestions of the moment, at the risk of an occasional slip of the tongue, perceived the instant it escapes, but just one syllable too late, than the royal reputation of never saying a foolish thing.

—What shall I do with this Little Man? There is only one thing to do,—and that is, to let him talk when he will. The day of the "Autocrat's" monologues is over.

—My friend, said I to the young fellow whom, as I have said, the boarders call "John,"—My friend, I said, one morning, after breakfast, can you give me any information respecting the deformed person who sits at the other end of the table?

What! the Sculpin? said the young fellow.

The diminutive person, with angular curvature of the spine, I said, and double *talipes varus*, I beg your pardon, with two club-feet.

Is that long word what you call it when a fellah walks so

said the young man, making his fists revolve round an imaginary axis, as you may have seen youth of tender age and limited pugilistic knowledge, when they show how they would punish an adversary, themselves protected by this rotating guard, the middle knuckle, meantime, thumb-supported, fiercely prominent, death-threatening.

It is, said I.—But would you have the kindness to tell me if you know anything about this deformed person?

About the Sculpin? said the young fellow.

My good friend, said I, I am sure, by your countenance, you would not hurt the feelings of one who has been hardly enough treated by Nature to be spared by his fellows. Even in speaking of him to others, I could wish that you might not employ a term which implies contempt for what should inspire only pity.

A fellah's no business to be so——crooked, said the young man called John.

Yes, yes, I said, thoughtfully, the strong hate the weak. It's all right. The arrangement has reference to the race, and not to the individual. Infirmary must be kicked out, or the stock run down. Wholesale moral arrangements are so different from retail! I understand the instinct, my friend; it is cosmic, it is planetary, it is a conservative principle in creation.

The young fellow's face gradually lost its expression as I was speaking, until it became as blank of vivid significance as the countenance of a gingerbread rabbit with two currants in the place of eyes. He had not taken my meaning.

Presently the intelligence came back with a snap that made him wink, as he answered,—Jest so. All right. A r. Put her through. That's the way to talk. Did you speak to me, sir? Here the young man struck up that well-known song which I think they used to sing at Masonic festivals, beginning, "Aldiborontiphoscophornio, Where left you Chrononhotonthologos?"

I beg your pardon, I said; all I meant was, that men, as temporary occupants of a permanent abode called human life, which is improved or injured by occupancy, according to the style of tenant, have a natural dislike to those who, if they live the life of the race as well as of the individual, will leave lasting injurious effects upon the abode spoken of, which is to be occupied by countless future generations. This is the final cause of the underlying brute instinct which we have in common with the herds.

——The gingerbread-rabbit expression was coming on so fast, that I thought I must try again.—It's a pity that families are kept up, where there are such hereditary infirmities. Still, let us treat this poor man fairly, and not call him names. Do you know what his name is?



I know what the rest of 'em call him, said the young fellow. They call him Little Boston. There's no harm in that, is there?

It is an honourable term, I replied. But why *Little Boston*, in a place where most are Bostonians?

Because nobody else is quite so Boston all over as he is, said the young fellow.

"L. B. Ob. 1692." Little Boston let him be, when we talk about him. The ring he wears labels him well enough. There is stuff in the little man, or he wouldn't stick so manfully by this crooked, crotchety old town. Give him a chance. You will drop the Sculpin, won't you? I said to the young fellow.

Drop him? he answered, I ha'n't took him up yet.

No, no, the term, I said, the term. Don't call him so any more, if you please. Call him Little Boston, if you like.

All right, said the young fellow. I wouldn't be hard on the poor little——

The word he used was objectionable in point of significance and of grammar. It was a frequent termination of certain adjectives among the Romans, as of those designating a person following the sea, or given to rural pursuits. It is classed by custom among the profane words; why, it is hard to say, but it is largely used in the street by those who speak of their fellows in pity or in wrath.

I never heard the young fellow apply the name of the odious pretended fish to the little man from that day forward.

——Here we are, then, at our boarding-house. First, myself, the Professor, a little way from the head of the table, on the right, looking down, where the "Autocrat" used to sit. At the further end sits the Landlady. At the head of the table, just now, the Koh-i-noor, or the gentleman with the *diamond*. Opposite me is a Venerable Gentleman with a bland countenance, who as yet has spoken little. The Divinity-Student is my neighbour on the right, and, further down, that Young Fellow of whom I have repeatedly spoken. The Landlady's Daughter sits near the Koh-i-noor, as I said. The Poor Relation near the Landlady. At the right upper corner is a fresh-looking youth, of whose name and history I have as yet learned nothing. Next the further left-hand corner, near the lower end of the table, sits the Deformed Person. The chair at his side, occupying that corner, is empty. I need not specially mention the other boarders, with the exception of Benjamin Franklin, the Landlady's son, who sits near his mother. We are a tolerably assorted set, difference enough and likeness enough; but still it seems to me there is something wanting. The Landlady's Daughter is the *prima donna* in the way of feminine attractions. I am not quite satisfied with this young lady. She wears more "jewelry,"



as certain young ladies call their trinkets, than I care to see on a person in her position. Her voice is strident, her laugh too much like a giggle, and she has that foolish way of dancing and bobbing like a quill float with a "minnum" biting the hook below it, which one sees and weeps over sometimes in persons of more pretensions. I can't help hoping we shall put something into that empty chair yet which will add the missing string to our social harp. I hear talk of a rare Miss who is expected. Something in the school-girl way, I believe. We shall see.

— My friend who calls himself *The Autocrat* has given me a caution which I am going to repeat, with my comment upon it, for the benefit of all concerned.

Professor, said he, one day,—don't you think your brain will run dry before a year's out, if you don't get the pump to help the cow? Let me tell you what happened to me once. I put a little money into a bank, and bought a cheque-book, so that I might draw it as I wanted, in sums to suit. Things went on nicely for a time ; scratching with a pen was as easy as rubbing Aladdin's Lamp ; and my blank cheque-book seemed to be a dictionary of possibilities, in which I could find all the synonyms of happiness, and realize any one of them on the spot. A cheque came back to me at last with these two words on it, *No funds*. My cheque-book was a volume of waste-paper.

Now, Professor, said he, I have drawn something out of your bank, you know ; and just so sure as you keep drawing out your soul's currency without making new deposits, the next thing will be, *No funds*,—and then, where will you be, my boy ? These little bits of paper mean your gold, and your silver, and your copper, Professor ; and you will certainly break up and go to pieces if you don't hold on to your metallic basis.

There is something in that, said I ; only I rather think life can coin thought somewhat faster than I can count it off in words. What if one shall go round and dry up with soft napkins all the dew that falls of a June evening on the leaves of his garden ? Shall there be no more dew on those leaves thereafter ? Marry, yea,—many drops, large and round, and full of moonlight as those thou shalt have absterged !

Here am I, the Professor,—a man who has lived long enough to have plucked the flowers of life and come to the berries, which are not always sad-coloured, but sometimes golden-hued as the crocus of April, or rosy-cheeked as the damask of June ; a man who staggered against books as a baby, and will totter against them if he lives to decrepitude ; with a brain as full of tingling thoughts, such as they are, as a limb which we call "asleep," because it is so particularly awake, is of pricking points,—presenting a key-board of nerve-pulps, not as yet tanned or ossified, to the finger-touch of all outward agencies ; knowing

something of the filmy threads of this web of life in which we insects buzz awhile, waiting for the grey old spider to come along ; contented enough with daily realities, but twirling on his finger the key of a private Bedlam of ideals ; in knowledge feeding with the fox oftener than with the stork,—loving better the breadth of a fertilizing inundation than the depth of a narrow artesian well ; finding nothing too small for his contemplation in the markings of the *grammatophora subtilissima*, and nothing too large in the movement of the solar system towards the star Lambda of the constellation Hercules ;—and the question is, whether there is anything left for me, the Professor, to suck out of creation, after my lively friend has had his straw in the bung-hole of the Universe !

A man's mental reactions with the atmosphere of life must go on, whether he will or no, as between his blood and the air he breathes. As to catching the residuum of the process, or what we call *thought*—the gaseous ashes of burned-out *thinking*—the excretion of mental respiration,—that will depend on many things, as, on having a favourable intellectual temperature about one, and a fitting receptacle. I sow more thought-seeds in twenty-four hours' travel over the desert-sand, along which my lonely consciousness paces day and night, than I shall throw into soil where it will germinate, in a year. All sorts of bodily and mental perturbations come between us and the due projection of our thought. The pulse-like "fits of easy and difficult transmission" seem to reach even the transparent medium through which our souls are seen. We know our humanity by its often intercepted rays, as we tell a revolving light from a star or meteor by its constantly recurring obscuration.

An illustrious scholar once told me that in the first lecture he ever delivered, he spoke but half his allotted time, and felt as if he had told all he knew. Braham came forward once to sing one of his most famous and familiar songs, and for his life could not recall the first line of it ; he told his mishap to the audience, and they screamed it at him in a chorus of a thousand voices. Milton could not write to suit himself, except from the autumnal to the vernal equinox. One in the clothing business, who, there is reason to suspect, may have inherited by descent the great poet's impressible temperament, let a customer slip through his fingers one day, without fitting him with a new garment. "Ah !" said he to a friend of mine, who was standing by, "if it hadn't been for that confounded headache of mine this morning, I'd have had a coat on that man, in spite of himself, before he left the store." A passing throb, only ; but it deranged the nice mechanism required to persuade the accidental human being, *x*, into a given piece of broadcloth, *a*.

We must take care not to confound this frequent difficulty of

transmission of our ideas with want of ideas. I suppose that a man's mind does in time form a neutral salt with the elements in the universe for which it has special elective affinities. In fact, I look upon a library as a kind of mental chemist's shop, filled with the crystals of all forms and hues which have come from the union of individual thought with local circumstances or universal principles.

When a man has worked out his special affinities in this way, there is an end of his genius as a real solvent. No more effervescence and hissing tumult as he pours his sharp thought on the world's biting alkaline unbeliefs ! No more corrosion of the old monumental tablets covered with lies ! No more taking up of dull earths, and turning them, first into clear solutions, and then into lustrous prisms !

I, the Professor, am very much like other men. I shall not find out when I have used up my affinities. What a blessed thing it is that Nature, when she invented, manufactured, and patented her authors, contrived to make critics out of the chips that were left ! Painful as the task is, they never fail to warn the author, in the most impressive manner, of the probabilities of failure in what he has undertaken. Sad as the necessity is, to their delicate sensibilities, they never hesitate to advertise him of the decline of his powers, and to press upon him the propriety of retiring before he sinks into imbecility. Trusting to their kind offices, I shall endeavour to fulfil —

*Bridget enters, and begins clearing the table.*

The following poem is my (The Professor's) only contribution to the great department of Ocean-Cable literature. As all the poets of this country will be engaged for the next six weeks in writing for the premium offered by the Crystal Palace Company for the Burns' Centenary (so called, according to our Benjamin Franklin, because there will be na'ry a cent for any of us), poetry will be very scarce and dear. Consumers may, consequently, be glad to take the present article, which, by the aid of a Latin tutor and a Professor of Chemistry, will be found intelligible to the educated classes.

DE SAUTY.

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE.

*Professor.*

*Blue-Nose.*

PROFESSOR.

TELL me, O Provincial ! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal !  
Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,  
Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,  
Holding talk with nations ?

Is there a De Sauty ambulant on Tellus,  
Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormant in night-cap,  
Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature  
Three times daily patent?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal?  
Or is he a *mythos*,—ancient word for "humbug,"—  
Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed  
Romulus and Remus?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty?  
Or a living product of galvanic action,  
Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse's flint-solution?  
Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal!

BLUE-NOSE.

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,  
Much-conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!  
Pretermitt thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward me,  
Thou shalt hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,  
At the polar focus of the wire electric  
Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:  
Called himself "DE SAUTY."

As the small opossum held in pouch maternal  
Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,  
So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,  
Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced stranger,—  
Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy,—  
And, from time to time, in sharp articulation,  
Said, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

From the lonely station passed the utterance, spreading  
Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves of steeples,  
Till the land was filled with loud reverberations  
Of "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

When the current slackened, drooped the mystic stranger,—  
Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker,—  
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odour  
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,  
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,  
Till one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,  
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,  
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,  
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?) Alumin. (?) Cuprum (?),  
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!  
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!  
Give us a new cable, then again we'll hear him  
Cry, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

## II.

**B**ACK again! A turtle—which means a tortoise—is fond of his shell; but if you put a live coal on his back, he crawls out of it. So the boys say.

It is a libel on the turtle. He grows to his shell, and his shell is in his body as much as his body is in his shell. I don't think there is one of our boarders quite so testudineous as I am. Nothing but a combination of motives, more peremptory than the coal on the turtle's back, could have got me to leave the shelter of my carapace; and after memorable interviews, and kindest hospitalities, and grand sights, and huge influx of patriotic pride—for every American owns all America,—

“Creation's heir,—the world, the world is”

his, if anybody's,—I come back with the feeling which a boned turkey might experience, if, retaining his consciousness, he were allowed to resume his skeleton.

Welcome, O Fighting Gladiator, and Recumbent Cleopatra, and Dying Warrior, whose classic outlines (reproduced in the calcined mineral of Lutetia) crown my loaded shelves! Welcome, ye triumphs of pictorial art (repeated by the magic graver) that look down upon me from the walls of my sacred cell! Vesalius, as Titian drew him, high-fronted, still-eyed, thick-bearded, with signet-ring, as beseems a gentleman, with book and carelessly-held eyeglass, marking him a scholar; thou, too, Jan Kuyper, commonly called Jan Praktiseer, old man of a century and seven years besides, father of twenty sons and two daughters, cut in copper by Houbraken, bought from a portfolio on one of the Paris *quais*; and ye Three Trees of Rembrandt, black in shadow against the blaze of sunlight; and thou Rosy Cottager of Sir Joshua,—thy roses hinted by the peppery burin of Bartolozzi; ye, too, of lower grades in nature, yet not unlovely nor unrenowned, Young Bull of Paulus Potter, and Sleeping Cat of Cornelius Visscher; welcome once more to my eyes! The old books look out from the shelves, and I seem to read on their backs something besides their titles,—a kind of solemn greeting. The crimson carpet flushes warm under my feet. The arm-chair hugs me; the swivel-chair spins round with me, as if it were giddy with pleasure; the vast recumbent *fauteuil* stretches itself out under my weight, as one joyous with food and wine stretches in after-dinner laughter.

The boarders were pleased to say that they were glad to get me back. One of them ventured a compliment, namely—that I talked as if I believed what I said. This was apparently considered something unusual, by its being mentioned.

One who means to talk with entire sincerity, I said, always

feels himself in danger of two things, namely—an affectation of bluntness, like that of which Cornwall accuses Kent in “Lear,” and actual rudeness. What a man wants to do, in talking with a stranger, is to get and to give as much of the best and most real life that belongs to the two talkers as the time will let him. Life is short, and conversation apt to run to mere words. Mr. Huc, I think it is, who tells us some very good stories about the way in which two Chinese gentlemen contrive to keep up a long talk without saying a word which has any meaning in it. Something like this is occasionally heard on this side of the Great Wall. The best Chinese talkers I know are some pretty women whom I meet from time to time. Pleasant, airy, complimentary, the little flakes of flattery glimmering in their talk like the bits of gold-leaf in *eau-de-vie de Dantzic*; their accents flowing on in a soft ripple,—never a wave, and never a calm; words nicely fitted, but never a coloured phrase, or a high-flavoured epithet; they turn air into syllables so gracefully, that we find meaning for the music they make as we find faces in the coals and fairy palaces in the clouds. There is something very odd, though, about this mechanical talk.

You have sometimes been in a train on the railroad when the engine was detached a long way from the station you were approaching? Well, you have noticed how quietly and rapidly the cars kept on, just as if the locomotive were drawing them? Indeed, you would not have suspected that you were travelling on the strength of a dead fact, if you had not seen the engine running away from you on a side-track. Upon my conscience, I believe some of these pretty women detach their minds entirely, sometimes, from their talk,—and, what is more, that we never know the difference. Their lips let off the fluty syllables just as their fingers would sprinkle the music-drops from their pianos; unconscious habit turns the phrase of thought into words just as it does that of music into notes. Well, they govern the world, for all that,—these sweet-lipped women,—because beauty is the index of a larger fact than wisdom.

—The Bombazine wanted an explanation.

Madam, said I, wisdom is the abstract of the past, but beauty is the promise of the future.

—All this, however, is not what I was going to say. Here am I, suppose, seated, we will say, at a dinner-table, alongside of an intelligent Englishman. We look in each other's faces—we exchange a dozen words. One thing is settled: we mean not to offend each other—to be perfectly courteous—more than courteous; for we are the entertainer and the entertained, and cherish particularly amiable feelings to each other. The claret is good; and if our blood reddens a little with its warm crimson, we are none the less kind for it.

— I don't think people that talk over their victuals are like to say anything very great, especially if they get their heads muddled with strong drink before they begin jabberin'.

The Bombazine uttered this with a sugary sourness, as if the words had been steeped in a solution of acetate of lead. The boys of my time used to call a hit like this a "side-winder."

— I must finish this woman.

Madam, I said, the Great Teacher seems to have been fond of talking as he sat at meat. Because this was a good while ago, in a far-off place, you forget what the true fact of it was,—that those were real dinners, where people were hungry and thirsty, and where you met a very miscellaneous company. Probably there was a great deal of loose talk among the guests; at any rate, there was always wine, we may believe.

Whatever may be the hygienic advantages or disadvantages of wine,—and I, for one, except for certain particular ends, believe in water, and, I blush to say it, in black tea,—there is no doubt about its being the grand specific against dull dinners. A score of people come together in all moods of mind and body. The problem is, in the space of one hour, more or less, to bring them all into the same condition of slightly exalted life. Food alone is enough for one person, perhaps,—talk, alone, for another; but the grand equalizer and fraternizer, which works up the radiators to their maximum radiation, and the absorbents to their maximum receptivity, is now just where it was when

"The conscious water saw its Lord and blushed,"

—when six great vessels containing water, the whole amounting to more than a hogshead-full, were changed into the best of wine. I once wrote a song about wine, in which I spoke so warmly of it, that I was afraid some would think it was written *inter pocula*; whereas it was composed in the bosom of my family, under the most tranquillizing domestic influences.

— The Divinity-Student turned towards me, looking mischievous. Can you tell me, he said, who wrote a song for a temperance celebration once, of which the following is a verse?—

Alas for the loved one, too gentle and fair  
The joys of the banquet to chasten and share!  
Her eye lost its light that his goblet might shine,  
And the rose of her cheek was dissolved in his wine!

I did, I answered. What are you going to do about it? I will tell you another line I wrote long ago:—

Don't be "consistent,"—but be simply *true*.

The longer I live, the more I am satisfied of two things: first, that the truest lives are those that are cut rose-diamond-fashion, with many facets answering to the many-planned aspects

of the world about them ; secondly, that society is always trying in some way or other to grind us down to a single flat surface. It is hard work to resist this grinding-down action. Now give me a chance. Better eternal and universal abstinence than the brutalities of those days that made wives and mothers and daughters and sisters blush for those whom they should have honoured, as they came reeling home from their debauches ! Yet better even excess than lying and hypocrisy ; and if wine is upon all our tables, let us praise it for its colour and fragrance and social tendency, so far as it deserves, and not hug a bottle in the closet, and pretend not to know the use of a wine-glass at a public dinner ! I think you will find that people who honestly mean to be true really contradict themselves much more rarely than those who try to be “consistent.” But a great many things we say can be made to appear contradictory, simply because they are partial views of a truth, and may often look unlike at first, as a front view of a face and its profile often do.

Here is a distinguished divine, for whom I have great respect, for I owe him a charming hour at one of our literary anniversaries, and he has often spoken noble words ; but he holds up a remark of my friend the “Autocrat,”—which I grieve to say he twice misquotes, by omitting the very word which gives it its significance,—the word *fluid*, intended to typify the mobility of the restricted will,—holds it up, I say, as if it attacked the reality of the self-determining principle, instead of illustrating its limitations by an image. Now I will not explain any farther, still less defend, and least of all attack, but simply quote a few lines from one of my friend’s poems, printed more than ten years ago, and ask the distinguished gentleman where he has ever asserted more strongly or absolutely the independent will of the “subcreative centre,” as my heretical friend has elsewhere called man :—

Thought, conscience, will, to make them all thy own  
 He rent a pillar from the eternal throne !  
 Made in His image, thou most nobly dare  
 The thorny crown of sovereignty to share.  
 Think not too meanly of thy low estate ;  
 Thou hast a choice ; to choose is to create !

If he will look a little closely, he will see that the profile and the full-face views of the will are both true and perfectly consistent.

Now let us come back, after this long digression, to the conversation with the intelligent Englishman. We begin skirmishing with a few light ideas,—testing for thoughts,—as our electro-chemical friend, De Sauty, if there were such a person, would test for his current ; trying a little litmus-paper



for acids, and then a slip of turmeric-paper for alkalies, as chemists do with unknown compounds ; flinging the lead, and looking at the shells and sands it brings up to find out whether we are like to keep in shallow water, or shall have to drop the deep-sea line ;—in short, seeing what we have to deal with. If the Englishman gets his H's pretty well placed, he comes from one of the higher grades of the British social order, and we shall find him a good companion.

But, after all, here is a great fact between us. We belong to two different civilizations, and, until we recognize what separates us, we are talking like Pyramus and Thisbe, without any hole in the wall to talk through. Therefore, on the whole, if he were a superior fellow, incapable of mistaking it for personal conceit, I think I would let out the fact of the real American feeling, about old-world folks. They are children to us in certain points of view. They are playing with toys we have done with for whole generations. That silly little drum they are always beating on, and the trumpet and the feather they make so much noise and cut such a figure with, we have not quite outgrown, but play with much less seriously and constantly than they do. Then there is a whole museum of wigs, and masks, and lace-coats, and gold sticks, and grimaces and phrases, which we laugh at honestly, without affectation, that are still used in the old-world puppet-shows. I don't think we on our part ever understand the Englishman's concentrated loyalty and specialized reverence. But then we do think more of a man, as such (barring some little difficulties about race and complexion, which the Englishman will touch us on presently), than any people that ever lived did think of him. Our reverence is a great deal wider, if it is less intense. We have caste among us, to some extent, it is true ; but there is never a collar on the American wolf-dog such as you often see on the English mastiff, notwithstanding his robust, hearty individuality.

This confronting of two civilizations is always a grand sensation to me ; it is like cutting through the isthmus and letting the two oceans swim into each other's laps. The trouble is, it is so difficult to let out the whole American nature without its self-assertion seeming to take a personal character. But I never enjoy the Englishman so much as when he talks of Church and King like Manco Capac among the Peruvians. Then you get the real British flavour, which the cosmopolite Englishman loses.

How much better this thorough interpenetration of ideas than a barren interchange of courtesies, or a bush-fighting argument, in which each man tries to cover as much of himself and expose as much of his opponent as the tangled thicket of the disputed ground will let him !

—My thoughts flow in layers or strata, at least three deep. I follow a slow person's talk, and keep a perfectly clear under-current of my own beneath it. Under both runs obscurely a consciousness belonging to a third train of reflections, independent of the two others. I will try to write out a mental movement in three parts.

A.—First voice, or Mental Soprano,—thought follows a woman talking.

B.—Second voice, or Mental Baritone,—my running accompaniment.

C.—Third voice, or Mental Basso,—low grumble of an importunate, self-repeating idea.

A.—White lace, three skirts, looped with flowers, wreath of apple-blossoms, gold bracelets, diamond pin and ear-rings, the most delicious *berthe* you ever saw, white satin slippers—

B.—Deuce take her! What a fool she is! Hear her chatter! (Look out of window just here.—Two pages and a half of description, if it were all written out, in one tenth of a second.)—Go a-head, old lady! (Eye catches picture over fireplace.) There's that infernal family nose! Came over in the "Mayflower," on the first old fool's face. Why don't they wear a ring in it?

C.—You'll be late at lecture—late at lecture—late—late—late.

I observe that a deep layer of thought sometimes makes itself felt through the superincumbent strata, thus :—The usual single or double currents shall flow on, but there shall be an influence blending with them, disturbing them in an obscure way, until all at once I say,—Oh, there! I knew there was something troubling me; and the thought which had been working through comes up to the surface clear, definite and articulates itself, a disagreeable duty, perhaps, or an unpleasant recollection.

The inner world of thought and the outer world of events are alike in this, that they are both brimful. There is no space between consecutive thoughts, or between the never-ending series of actions. All pack tight, and mould their surfaces against each other, so that in the long run there is a wonderful average uniformity in the forms of both thoughts and actions—just as you find that cylinders crowded all become hexagonal prisms, and spheres pressed together are formed into regular polyhedra.

Every event that a man would master must be mounted on the run, and no man ever caught the reins of a thought except as it galloped by him. So, to carry out, with another comparison, my remark about the layers of thought, we may consider the mind, as it moves among thoughts or events, like a circus-rider, whirling round with a great troop of horses. He can mount a

fact or an idea, and guide it more or less completely, but he cannot stop it. So, as I said in another way at the beginning, he can stride two or three thoughts at once, but not break their steady walk, trot, or gallop. He can only take his foot from the saddle of one thought and put it on that of another.

—What is the saddle of a thought? Why, a word, of course. Twenty years after you have dismissed a thought, it suddenly wedges up to you through the press, as if it had been steadily galloping round and round all that time without a rider.

The will does not act in the interspaces of thought, for there are no such interspaces, but simply steps from the back of one moving thought upon that of another.

—I should like to ask, said the Divinity-Student, since we are getting into metaphysics, how you can admit space, if all things are in contact, and how you can admit time, if it is always *now* to something?

I thought it best not to hear this question.

—I wonder if you know this class of philosophers in books or elsewhere. One of them makes his bow to the public, and exhibits an unfortunate truth bandaged up so that it cannot stir hand or foot—as helpless, apparently, and unable to take care of itself, as an Egyptian mummy. He then proceeds, with the air and method of a master, to take off the bandages. Nothing can be neater than the way in which he does it. But as he takes off layer after layer, the truth seems to grow smaller and smaller. and some of its outlines begin to look like something we have seen before. At last, when he has got them all off, and the truth struts out naked, we recognize it as a diminutive and familiar acquaintance whom we have known in the streets all our lives. The fact is, the philosopher has coaxed the truth into his study, and put all those bandages on ; of course, it is not very hard for him to take them off. Still, a great many people like to watch the process—he does it so neatly !

Dear ! dear ! I am ashamed to write and talk, sometimes, when I see how those functions of the large-brained, thumb-opposing plantigrade are abused by my fellow-vertebrates—perhaps by myself. How they spar for wind, instead of hitting from the shoulder !

—The young fellow called John arose, and placed himself in a neat fighting attitude. Fetch on the fellah that makes them long words ! he said, and planted a straight hit with the right fist in the concave palm of the left hand with a click like a cup and ball. You small boy there, hurry up that “Webster’s Unabridged !”

The little gentleman with the malformation, before described, shocked the propriety of the breakfast-table by a loud utterance of three words, of which the two last were “Webster’s Un-

abridged," and the first was an emphatic monosyllable. Beg pardon, he added, forgot myself. But let us have an English dictionary, if we are to have any. I don't believe in clipping the coin of the realm, sir! If I put a weathercock on my house, sir, I want it to tell which way the wind blows up aloft—off from the prairies to the ocean, or off from the ocean to the prairies, or any way it wants to blow! I don't want a weathercock with a winch in an old gentleman's study that he can take hold of and turn, so that the vane shall point west when the great wind overhead is blowing east with all its might, sir! Wait till we give you a dictionary, sir! It takes Boston to do that thing, sir!

—Some folks think water can't run down-hill anywhere out of Boston, remarked the Koh-i-noor.

I don't know what *some folks think* so well as I know what *some fools say*, rejoined the Little Gentleman. If importing most dry goods made the best scholars, I dare say you would know where to look for 'em. Mr. Webster couldn't spell, sir, or wouldn't spell, sir—at any rate, he didn't spell; and the end of it was a fight between the owners of some copyrights and the dignity of this noble language which we have inherited from our English fathers. Language!—the blood of the soul, sir! into which our thoughts run and out of which they grow! We know what a word is worth here in Boston. Young Sam Adams got up on the stage at Commencement, out at Cambridge there, with his gown on, the Governor and Council looking on in the name of his Majesty, King George the Second, and the girls looking down out of the galleries, and taught people how to spell a word that wasn't in the Colonial dictionaries! *R-e, r-e, s-i-s, sis, t-a-n-c-e, tance, Resistance!* That was in '43, and it was a good many years before the Boston boys began spelling it with their muskets, but when they did begin, they spelt it so loud that the old bedridden women in the English almshouses heard every syllable! Yes, yes, yes, it was a good while before those other two Boston boys got the class so far along that it could spell those two hard words, *Independence* and *Union!* I tell you what, sir, there are a thousand lives, aye, sometimes a million, go to get a new word into a language that is worth speaking. We know what language means too well here in Boston to play tricks with it. We never make a new word till we have made a new thing or a new thought, sir! When we shaped the new mould of this continent, we had to make a few. When, by God's permission, we abrogated the primal curse of maternity, we had to make a word or two. The cutwater of this great Leviathan clipper, the OCCIDENTAL—this thirty-masted wind-and-steam wave-crusher—must throw a little spray over the human vocabulary as it splits the waters of a new world's destiny!

He rose as he spoke, until his stature seemed to swell into the fair human proportions. His feet must have been on the upper round of his high chair—that was the only way I could account for it.

Puts her through fust-rate, said the young fellow whom the boarders call John.

The venerable and kind-looking old gentleman who sits opposite said he remembered Sam Adams as Governor; an old man in a brown coat. Saw him take the chair on Boston Common. Was a boy then, and remembers sitting on the fence in front of the old Hancock House. Recollects he had a glazed 'lection bun, and sat eating it, and looking down on to the Common. Lalocks flowered late that year, and he got a great bunch off from the bushes in the Hancock front-yard.

Them 'lection buns are no go, said the young man John, so called. I know the trick. Give a fellah a fo'penny bun in the mornin', an' he downs the whole of it. In about an hour it swells up in his stomach as big as a football, and *his* feelin's sp'ilt for *that* day. That's the way to stop off a young one from eatin' up all the 'lection dinner.

Salem! Salem! not Boston, shouted the little man.

But the Koh-i-noor laughed a great rasping laugh, and the boy Benjamin Franklin looked sharp at his mother, as if he remembered the bun experiment as a part of his past personal history.

The little gentleman was holding a fork in his left hand. He stabbed a boulder of home-made bread with it, mechanically, and looked at it as if it ought to shriek. It did not, but he sat as if watching it.

—Language is a solemn thing, I said. It grows out of life—out of its agonies and ecstasies, its wants and its weariness. Every language is a temple, in which the soul of those who speak it is enshrined. Because Time softens its outlines and rounds the sharp angles of its cornices, shall a fellow take a pickaxe to help Time? Let me tell you what comes of meddling with things that can take care of themselves. A friend of mine had a watch given him, when he was a boy, a "bull's eye," with a loose silver case that came off like an oyster-shell from its contents; you know them—the cases that you hang on your thumb, while the *core*, or the real watch, lies in your hand, as naked as a peeled apple. Well, he began with taking off the case and so on; from one liberty to another, until he got it fairly open, and there were the works, as good as if they were alive—crown-wheel, balance-wheel, and all the rest, all right except one thing; there was a confounded little *hair* had got entangled round the balance-wheel. So my young Solomon got a pair of tweezers, and caught hold of the *hair* very nicely,

and pulled it right out, without touching any of the wheels when—buzzzzzz! and the watch had done up twenty-four hours in double magnetic-telegraph time! The English language was wound up to run some thousands of years, I trust; but if everybody is to be pulling at everything he thinks is a *hair*, our grandchildren will have to make the discovery that it is a hair-*spring*, and the old Anglo-Norman soul's-timekeeper will run down, as so many other dialects have done before it. I can't stand this meddling any better than you, sir. But we have a great deal to be proud of in the lifelong labours of that old lexicographer, and we musn't be ungrateful. Besides, don't let us deceive ourselves, the war of the dictionaries is only a disguised rivalry of cities, colleges, and especially of publishers. After all, it is likely that the language will shape itself by larger forces than phonography and dictionary-making. You may spade up the ocean as much as you like, and harrow it afterwards, if you can—but the moon will still lead the tides, and the winds will form their surface.

—Do you know Richardson's Dictionary? I said to my neighbour, the Divinity-Student.

Haöw? said the Divinity-Student. He coloured, as he noticed on my face a twitch in one of the muscles which tuck up the corner of the mouth (*zygomaticus major*), and which I could not hold back from making a little movement on its own account.

It was too late. A country-boy, lassoed when he was a half-grown colt, just as good as a city-boy, and in some ways, perhaps, better,—but caught a little too old not to carry some marks of his earlier ways of life. Foreigners who have talked a strange tongue half their lives, return to the language of their childhood in their dying hours. Gentlemen in fine linen, and scholars in large libraries, taken by surprise, or in a careless moment, will sometimes let slip a word they knew as boys in homespun and have not spoken since that time—but it lay there under all their culture. That is one way you may know the country boys after they have grown rich or celebrated; another is by the odd old family names, particularly those of the Hebrew prophets, which the good old people have saddled them with.

—Boston has enough of England about it to make a good English dictionary, said that fresh-looking youth, whom I have mentioned as sitting at the right upper corner of the table.

I turned, and looked him full in the face, for the pure, manly intonations arrested me. The voice was youthful, but full of character. I suppose some persons have a peculiar susceptibility in the matter of voice. Hear this.

Not long after the American Revolution, a young lady was sitting in her father's chaise in a street of this town of Boston. She overheard a little girl talking, or singing, and was mightily

taken with the tones of her voice. Nothing would satisfy her, but she must have that little girl come and live in her father's house. So the child came, being then nine years old. Until her marriage she remained under the same roof with the young lady. Her children became successively inmates of the lady's dwelling; and now, *seventy* years, or thereabouts, since the young lady heard the child singing, one of that child's children and one of her grandchildren are with her in that home, where she, no longer young, except in heart, passes her peaceful days. Three generations linked together by so light a breath of accident!

I liked the sound of this youth's voice, I said, and his look, when I came to observe him a little more closely. His complexion had something better than the bloom and freshness which had first attracted me;—it had that diffused *tone* which is a sure index of wholesome lusty life. A fine liberal style of nature it seemed to be: hair crisped, moustache springing thick and dark, head firmly planted, lips finished, as one commonly sees them in gentlemen's families, a pupil well contracted, and a mouth that opened frankly with a white flash of teeth that looked as if they could serve him as they say Ethan Allen's used to serve their owner,—to draw nails with. This is the kind of fellow to walk a frigate's deck and bowl his broadsides into the "Gadlant Thudnder-bomb," or any forty-port-holed adventurer who would like to exchange a few tons of iron compliments. I don't know what put this into my head, for it was not till some time afterward I learned the young fellow had been in the naval school at Annapolis. Something had happened to change his plan of life, and he was now studying engineering and architecture in Boston.

When the youth made the short remark which drew my attention to him, the little deformed gentleman turned round, and took a long look at him.

Good for the Boston boy! he said.

I am not a Boston boy, said the youth smiling; I am a Marylander.

I don't care where you come from, we'll make a Boston man of you, said the Little Gentleman. Pray, what part of Maryland did you come from, and how shall I call you?

The poor youth had to speak pretty loud, as he was at the right upper corner of the table, and the Little Gentleman next the lower left-hand corner. His face flushed a little, but he answered pleasantly, telling who he was, as if the little man's infirmity gave him a right to ask any questions he wanted to.

Here is the place for you to sit, said the Little Gentleman, pointing to the vacant chair next his own, at the corner.

You're go'n' to have a young lady next you, if you wait till to-morrow, said the Landlady to him.



He did not reply, but I had a fancy that he changed colour. It can't be that ~~he~~ has susceptibilities with reference to a contingent young lady! It can't be that he has had experiences which make him sensitive! Nature could not be quite so cruel as to set a heart throbbing in that poor little cage of ribs! There is no use in wasting notes of admiration. I must ask the landlady about him.

These are some of the facts she furnished:—Has not been long with her. Brought a sight of furniture, couldn't hardly get some of it upstairs. Hasn't seemed particularly attentive to the ladies. The Bombazine (whom she calls Cousin something or other) has tried to enter into conversation with him, but retired with the impression that he was indifferent to ladies' society. Paid his bill the other day without saying a word about it. Paid it in gold; had a great heap of twenty-dollar pieces. Hires her best room. Thinks he is a very nice little man, but lives dreadful lonely up in his chamber. Wants the care of some capable nuss. Never pitied anybody more in her life, never see a more interestin' person.

—My intention was, when I began making these notes, to let them consist principally of conversations between myself and the other boarders. So they will, very probably; but my curiosity is excited about this little boarder of ours, and my reader must not be disappointed, if I sometimes interrupt a discussion to give an account of whatever facts or traits I may discover about him. It so happens that his room is next to mine, and I have the opportunity of observing many of his ways without any active movements of curiosity. That his room contains heavy furniture, that he is a restless little body, and is apt to be up late, that he talks to himself, and keeps mainly to himself, is nearly all I have yet found out.

One curious circumstance happened lately, which I mention without drawing an absolute inference. Being at the studio of a sculptor with whom I am acquainted, the other day, I saw a remarkable cast of a *left arm*. On my asking where the model came from, he said it was taken direct from the arm of a *deformed person*, who had employed one of the Italian moulders to make the cast. It was a curious case, it should seem, of one beautiful limb upon a frame otherwise singularly imperfect. I have repeatedly noticed this little gentleman's use of his left arm. Can he have furnished the model I saw at the sculptor's?

—So we are to have a new boarder to-morrow. I hope there will be something pretty and pleasing about her. A woman with a creamy voice, and finished in *alto rilievo*, would be a variety in the boarding-house, a little more marrow and a little less sinew than our landlady and her daughter and the bombazine-clad female, all of whom are of the turkey-drumstick



style of organization. I don't mean that these are our only female companions ; but the rest being conversational non-combatants, mostly still, sad feeders, who take in their food as locomotives take in wood and water, and then wither away from the table like blossoms that never come to fruit, I have not yet referred to them as individuals.

I wonder what kind of young person we shall see in that empty chair to-morrow ?

—I read this song to the boarders after breakfast the other morning ; it was written for our fellows ; you know who they are, of course :—

### THE BOYS.

HAS there any old fellow got mixed with the boys ?  
If there has, take him out, without making a noise !  
Hang the Almanac's cheat, and the Catalogue's spite !  
Old Time is a liar ! We're twenty to-night !

We're twenty ! We're twenty ! Who says we are more ?  
He's tipsy,—young jackanapes !—show him the door !—  
“ Grey temples at twenty ? ”—Yes ! *white*, if we please ;  
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze !

Was it snowing I spoke of ? Excuse the mistake !  
Look close,—you will see not a sign of a flake ;  
We want some new garlands for those we have shed,—  
And these are white roses in place of the red !

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,  
Of talking (in public) as if we were old ;—  
That boy we call “ Doctor,” and this we call “ Judge ; ”—  
It's a neat little fiction—of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's “ The Speaker ”—the one on the right ;  
“ Mr. Mayor,” my young one, how are you to-night ?  
That's our “ Member of Congress,” we say when we chaff ;  
There's the “ Reverend ” What's-his-name?—don't make me laugh !

That boy with the grave mathematical look,  
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,  
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true* !  
So they chose him right in ; a good joke it was, too !

There's a boy—we pretend—with a three-decker brain,  
That could harness a team with a logical chain ;  
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,  
We called him “ The Justice,” but now he's “ The Squire.”

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith—  
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith ;  
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free—  
Just read on his medal—“ My country,—of thee ! ”

You hear that boy laughing ?—you think he's all fun,  
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done ;  
The children laugh loud, as they troop to his call,  
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all !

Yes, we're boys, always playing with tongue or with pen,  
 And I sometimes have asked—Shall we ever be men?  
 Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,  
 Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its grey!  
 The stars of its Winter, the dews of its May!  
 And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,  
 Dear Father, take care of thy children, the Boys!

### III.

[*The Professor talks with the Reader. He tells a Young Girl's Story.*]

**W**HEN the elements that went to the making of the first man, father of mankind, had been withdrawn from the world of unconscious matter, the balance of creation was disturbed. The materials that go to the making of one woman were set free by the abstraction from inanimate nature of one man's-worth of masculine constituents. These combined to make our first mother, by a logical necessity, involved in the previous creation of our common father. All this, mythically, illustratively, and by no means doctrinally or polemically.

The man implies the woman, you will understand. The excellent gentleman whom I had the pleasure of setting right in a trifling matter a few weeks ago believes in the frequent occurrence of miracles at the present day. So do I. I believe, if you could find an uninhabited coral-reef island, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, with plenty of cocoa-palms and bread-fruit on it, and put a handsome young fellow, like our Marylander, ashore upon it, if you touch there a year afterwards you would find him walking under the palm-trees arm-in-arm with a pretty woman.

Where would she come from?

Oh, that's the miracle!

—I was just as certain, when I saw that fine, high-coloured youth at the upper right-hand corner of our table, that there would appear some fitting feminine counterpart to him, as if I had been a clairvoyant, seeing it all beforehand.

—I have a fancy that those Marylanders are just about near enough to the sun to ripen well. How some of us fellows remember Joe and Harry, Baltimoreans, both! Joe, with his cheeks like lady-apples, and his eyes like black-heart cherries, and his teeth like the whiteness of the flesh of cocoa-nuts, and his laugh that set the chandelier-drops rattling overhead, as we sat at our sparkling banquets in those gay times! Harry, champion, by acclamation, of the College heavy-weights, broad-shouldered, bull-necked, square-jawed, six feet and trimmings, a little science, lots of pluck, good-natured as a steer

in peace, formidable as a red-eyed bison in the crack of hand-to-hand battle! Who forgets the great muster-day, and the collision of the classic with the democratic forces? The huge butcher, fifteen stone—two hundred and ten pounds—good weight,—steps out like Telamonian Ajax, defiant. No words from Harry, the Balthmorean—one of the quiet sort, who strike first, and do the talking, if there is any, afterwards. No words, but, in the place thereof, a clean, straight, hard hit, which took effect with a spank like the explosion of a percussion-cap, knocking the slayer of beeves down a sand-bank, followed, alas! by the too impetuous youth, so that both rolled down together, and the conflict terminated in one of those inglorious and inevitable Yankee *clinches*, followed by a general *mêlée*, which make our native fistic encounters so different from such admirably-ordered contests as that which I once saw at an English fair, where everything was done decently and in order, and the fight began and ended with such grave propriety, that a sporting parson need hardly have hesitated to open it with a devout petition, and, after it was over, dismiss the ring with a benediction.

I can't help telling one more story about this great field-day, though it is the most wanton and irrelevant digression. But all of us have a little speck of fight underneath our peace and goodwill to men—just a speck, for revolutions and great emergencies, you know—so that we should not submit to be trodden quite flat by the first heavy-heeled aggressor that came along. You can tell a portrait from an ideal head, I suppose, and a true story from one spun out of the writer's invention. See whether this sounds true or not.

Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin sent out two fine blood-horses, Barefoot and Serab by name, to Massachusetts, something before the time I am talking of. With them came a Yorkshire groom, a stocky little fellow, in velvet breeches, who made that mysterious hissing noise, traditionary in English stables, when he rubbed down the silken-skinned racers, in great perfection. After the soldiers had come from the muster-field, and some of the companies were on the village-common, there was still some skirmishing between a few individuals who had not had the fight taken out of them. The little Yorkshire groom thought he must serve out somebody. So he threw himself into an approved scientific attitude, and, in brief, emphatic language, expressed his urgent anxiety to accommodate any classical young gentleman who chose to consider himself a candidate for his attentions. I don't suppose there were many of the College boys that would have been a match for him in the art which Englishmen know so much more of than Americans, for the most part. However, one of the Sophomores, a very quiet,

peaceable fellow, just stepped out of the crowd, and, running straight at the groom, as he stood there, sparring away, struck him with the sole of his foot, a straight blow, as if it had been with his fist, and knocked him heels over head, and senseless, so that he had to be carried off from the field. This ugly way of hitting is the great trick of the French *savate*, which is not commonly thought able to stand its ground against English pugilistic science. These are old recollections, with not much to recommend them, except, perhaps, a dash of life, which may be worth a little something.

The young Marylander brought them all up, you may remember. He recalled to my mind those two splendid pieces of vitality I told you of. Both have been long dead. How often we see these great red flaring flambeaux of life blown out, as it were, by a puff of wind, and the little, single-wicked night-lamp of being, which some white-faced and attenuated invalid shades with trembling fingers, flickering on while they go out one after another, until its glimmer is all that is left to us of the generation it belonged to!

I told you that I was perfectly sure, beforehand, we should find some pleasing girlish or womanly shape to fill the blank at our table, and match the dark-haired youth at the upper corner.

There she sits, at the very opposite corner, just as far off as accident could put her, from this handsome fellow, by whose side she ought, of course, to be sitting. One of the "positive" blondes, as my friend, you may remember, used to call them. Tawny-haired, amber-eyed, full-throated, skin as white as a blanched almond. Looks dreamy to me, not self-conscious, though a black ribbon round her neck sets it off as a Marie-Antoinette's diamond-necklace could not do. So in her dress, there is a harmony of tints that looks as if an artist had run his eye over her, and given a hint or two, like the finishing touch to a picture. I can't help being struck with her, for she is at once rounded and fine in feature, looks calm, as blondes are apt to, and as if she might run wild, if she were trifled with. It is just as I knew it would be; and anybody can see that our young Marylander will be dead in love with her in a week.

Then if that little man would only turn out immensely rich, and have the good-nature to die and leave them all his money, it would be as nice as a three-volume novel.

The Little Gentleman is in a flurry, I suspect, with the excitement of having such a charming neighbour next him. I judge so mainly by his silence, and by a certain rapt and serious look on his face, as if he were thinking of something that had happened, or that might happen, or that ought to happen, or how beautiful her young life looked, or how hardly Nature had dealt with him, or something which struck him silent, at any rate. I

made several conversational openings for him, but he did not fire up as he often does. I even went so far as to indulge in a fling at the State House, which, as we all know, is, in truth, a very imposing structure, covering less ground than St. Peter's, but of similar general effect. The little man looked up, but did not reply to my taunt. He said to the young lady, however, that the State House was the Parthenon of our Acropolis, which seemed to please her, for she smiled, and he reddened a little, so I thought. I don't think it right to watch persons who are the subjects of special infirmity, but we all do it.

I see that they have crowded the chairs a little at that end of the table, to make room for another new-comer of the lady sort. A well-mounted, middle-aged preparation, wearing her hair without a cap,—pretty wide in the parting, though,—and whose features vaguely hinted, says little as yet, but seems to keep her eye on the young lady, as if having some responsibility for her.—

My record is a blank for some days after this. In the mean time I have contrived to make out the person and the story of our young lady, who, according to appearances, ought to furnish us a heroine for a boarding-house romance before a year is out. It is very curious that she should prove connected with a person many of us have heard of. Yet curious as it is, I have been a hundred times struck with the circumstance that the most remote facts are constantly striking each other; just as vessels starting from ports thousands of miles apart pass close to each other in the naked breadth of the ocean, nay, sometimes even touch, in the dark, with a crack of timbers, a gurgling of water, a cry of startled sleepers—a cry mysteriously echoed in warning dreams, as the wife of some Gloucester fisherman, some coasting skipper, wakes with a shriek, calls the name of her husband, and sinks back to uneasy slumbers upon her lonely pillow—a widow.

Oh, these mysterious meetings! Leaving all the vague, waste, endless spaces of the washing desert, the ocean-steamer and the fishing-smack sail straight towards each other as if they ran in grooves ploughed for them in the waters from the beginning of creation! Not only things and events, but our own thoughts, are so full of these surprises, that, if there were a reader in my parish who did not recognize the familiar occurrence of what I am now going to mention, I should think it a case for the missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of Intelligence among the Comfortable Classes.

There are about as many twins in the births of thought as of children. For the first time in your lives you learn some fact or come across some idea. Within an hour, a day, a week,

that same fact or idea strikes you from another quarter. It seems as if it had passed into space and bounded back upon you as an echo from the blank wall that shuts in the world of thought. Yet no possible connection exists between the two channels by which the thought or the fact arrived. Let me give an infinitesimal illustration.

One of the Boys mentioned, the other evening, in the course of a very pleasant poem he read us, a little trick of the Commons table-boarders, which I, nourished at the parental board, had never heard of. Young fellows being always hungry—Allow me to stop dead-short, in order to utter an aphorism which has been forming itself in one of the blank interior spaces of my intelligence, like a crystal in the cavity of a geode.

#### APHORISM BY THE PROFESSOR.

In order to know whether a human being is young or old, offer it food of different kinds at short intervals. If young, it will eat anything at any hour of the day or night. If old, it observes stated periods, and you might as well attempt to regulate the time of high-water to suit a fishing-party as to change these periods.

The crucial experiment is this. Offer a bulky and boggy bun to the suspected individual just ten minutes before dinner. If this is eagerly accepted and devoured, the fact of youth is established. If the subject of the question starts back and expresses surprise and incredulity, as if you could not possibly be in earnest, the fact of maturity is no less clear.

—Excuse me,—I return to my story of the Commons-table. Young fellows being always hungry, and tea and dry toast being the meagre fare of the evening meal, it was a trick of some of the Boys to impale a slice of meat upon a fork, at dinner-time, and stick the fork, holding it, beneath the table, so that they could get it at tea-time. The dragons that guarded this table of the Hesperides found out the trick at last, and kept a sharp look-out for missing forks ;—they knew where to find one, if it was not in its place. Now the odd thing was, that, after waiting so many years to hear of this College trick, I should hear it mentioned a *second time* within the same twenty-four hours by a College youth of the present generation. Strange, but true. And so it has happened to me and to every person, often and often, to be hit in rapid succession by these twinned facts or thoughts, as if they were linked like chain-shot.

I was going to leave the simple reader to wonder over this, taking it as an unexplained marvel. I think, however, I will turn over a furrow of subsoil in it. The explanation is, of

course, that in a great many thoughts there must be a few coincidences, and these instantly arrest our attention. Now we shall probably never have the least idea of the enormous number of impressions which pass through our consciousness, until in some future life we see the photographic record of our thoughts and the stereoscopic picture of our actions. There go more pieces to make up a conscious life or a living body, than you think for. Why, some of you were surprised when a friend of mine told you there were fifty-eight separate pieces in a fiddle. How many "swimming glands"—solid, organized, regularly formed, rounded disks, taking an active part in all your vital processes, part and parcel, each one of them, of your corporeal being—do you suppose are whirled along like pebbles in a stream, with the blood which warms your frame and colours your cheeks? A noted German physiologist spread out a minute drop of blood, under the microscope, in narrow streaks, and counted the globules, and then made a calculation. The counting by the micrometer took him a *week*. You have, my full-grown friend, of these little couriers in crimson or scarlet livery, running on your vital errands day and night as long as you live, sixty-five billions, five hundred and seventy thousand millions, errors excepted. Did I hear some gentleman say, "Doubted?" I am the Professor; I sit in my chair with a petard under it that will blow me through the sky-light of my lecture-room, if I do not know what I am talking about, and whom I am quoting.

Now, my dear friends, who are putting your hands to your foreheads, and saying to yourselves that you feel a little confused, as if you had been waltzing until things began to whirl slightly round you, is it possible that you do not clearly apprehend the exact connection of all that I have been saying, and its bearing on what is now to come? Listen, then. The number of these living elements in our bodies illustrates the incalculable multitude of our thoughts; the number of our thoughts accounts for those frequent coincidences spoken of; these coincidences in the world of thought illustrate those which we constantly observe in the world of outward events, of which the presence of the young girl now at our table, and proving to be the daughter of an old acquaintance some of us may remember, is the special example which led me through this labyrinth of reflections, and finally lands me at the commencement of this young girl's story, which, as I said, I have found the time and felt the interest to learn something of, and which I think I can tell without wronging the unconscious subject of my brief delineation.



## IRIS.

YOU remember, perhaps, in some papers published awhile ago, an odd poem written by an old Latin tutor? He brought up at the verb *amo*, I love, as all of us do, and by-and-by Nature opened her great living dictionary for him at the word *filia*, a daughter. The poor man was greatly perplexed in choosing a name for her. *Lucretia* and *Virginia* were the first that he thought of; but then came up those pictured stories of Titus Livius, which he could never read without crying, though he had read them a hundred times.

Lucretia, sending for her husband and her father, each to bring one friend with him, and awaiting them in her chamber. To them her wrongs briefly. Let them see to the wretch, she will take care of herself. Then the hidden knife flashes out, and sinks into her heart. She slides from her seat, and falls dying. "Her husband and her father cry aloud."—No, not Lucretia.

—Virginius, a brown old soldier, father of a nice girl. She engaged to a very promising young man. Decemvir Appius takes a violent fancy to her—must have her at any rate. Hires a lawyer to present the arguments in favour of the view that she was another man's daughter. There used to be lawyers in Rome that would do such things. All right. There are two sides to every thing. *Audi alteram partem*. The legal gentleman has no opinion, he only states the evidence. A doubtful case. Let the young lady be under the protection of the Honourable Decemvir until it can be looked up thoroughly. Father thinks it best, on the whole, to give in. Will explain the matter, if the young lady and her maid will step this way. *That* is the explanation,—a stab with a butcher's knife, snatched from a stall, meant for other lambs than this poor bleeding Virginia!

The old man thought over the story. Then he must have one look at the original. So he took down the first volume, and read it over. When he came to that part where it tells how the young gentleman she was engaged to, and a friend of his, took up the poor girl's bloodless shape, and carried it through the street, and how all the women followed, wailing, and asking if that was what their daughters were coming to—if that was what they were to get for being good girls—he melted down into his accustomed tears of pity and grief, and, through them all, of delight at the charming Latin of the narrative. But it was impossible to call his child Virginia. He could never look at her without thinking she had a knife sticking in her bosom.

*Dido* would be a good name, and a fresh one. She was a queen, and the founder of a great city. Her story had been immortalized by the greatest of poets, for the old Latin tutor clove to "*Virgilius Maro*," as he called him, as closely as ever



Dante did in his memorable journey. So he took down his Virgil, it was the smooth-leaved, open-lettered quarto of Baskerville—and began reading the loves and mishaps of Dido. It wouldn't do. A lady who had not learned discretion by experience, and came to an evil end. He shook his head, as he sadly repeated,

“—misera ante diem, subitoque accensa furore ;”

but when he came to the lines,

“Ergo Iris croceis per cœlum roscida pennis  
Mille trahens varios adverso Sole colores.”

he jumped up with a great exclamation, which the particular recording angel who heard it pretended not to understand, or it might have gone hard with the Latin tutor some time or other.

“*Iris* shall be her name !” he said. So her name was *Iris*.

—The natural end of a tutor is to perish by starvation. It is only a question of time, just as with the burning of college libraries. These all burn up sooner or later, provided they are not housed in brick or stone and iron. I don't mean that you will see in the registry of deaths that this or that particular tutor died of well-marked, uncomplicated starvation. They *may* even, in extreme cases, be carried off by a thin, watery kind of apoplexy, which sounds very well in the returns, but means little to those who know that it is only debility settling on the head. Generally, however, they fade and waste away under various pretexts—calling it dyspepsia, consumption, and so on, to put a decent appearance upon the case, and keep up the credit of the family and the institution where they have passed through the successive stages of inanition.

In some cases it takes a great many years to kill a tutor by the process in question. You see, they do get food and clothes and fuel, in appreciable quantities, such as they are. You will even notice rows of books in their rooms, and a picture or two—things that look as if they had surplus money ; but these superfluities are the *water of crystallization* to scholars, and you can never get them away till the poor fellows effloresce into dust. Do not be deceived. The tutor breakfasts on coffee made of beans, adulcorated with milk watered to the verge of transparency ; his mutton is tough and elastic, up to the moment when it becomes tired out and tasteless ; his coal is a sullen sulphurous anthracite, which rusts into ashes, rather than burns, in the shallow grate ; his flimsy broadcloth is too thin for winter and too thick for summer. The greedy lungs of fifty hot-blooded boys suck the oxygen from the air he breathes in his recitation-room. In short, he undergoes a process of gentle and gradual starvation.

—The mother of little *Iris* was not called *Electra*, like hers of the old story, neither was her grandfather *Oceanus*.

Her blood-name, which she gave away with her heart to the Latin tutor, was a plain old English one, and her water-name was Hannah, beautiful as recalling the mother of Samuel, and admirable as reading equally well from the initial letter forwards and from the terminal letter backwards. The poor lady, seated with her companion at the chess-board of matrimony, had but just pushed forward her one little white pawn upon an empty square, when the Black Knight, that cares nothing for castles or kings or queens, swooped down upon her and swept her from the larger board of life.

The old Latin tutor put a modest blue stone at the head of his late companion, with her name and age and *Eheu!* upon it,—a smaller one at her feet, with initials; and left her by herself to be rained and snowed on, which is a hard thing to do for those whom we have cherished tenderly.

About the time that the lichens, falling on the stone, like drops of water, had spread into fair, round rosettes, the tutor had starved into a slight cough. Then he began to draw the buckle of his black pantaloons a little tighter, and took in another reef in his never ample waistcoat. His temples got a little hollow, and the contrasts of colour in his cheeks more vivid than of old. After a while his walks fatigued him, and he was tired, and breathed hard after going up a flight or two of stairs. Then came on other marks of inward trouble and general waste, which he spoke of to his physician as peculiar, and doubtless owing to accidental causes; to all which the doctor listened with deference, as if it had not been the old story that one in five or six of mankind in temperate climates tells, or has told for him, as if it were something new. As the doctor went out, he said to himself,—“On the rail at last. Accommodation train. A good many stops, but will get to the station by-and-by.” So the doctor wrote a recipe, with the astrological sign of Jupiter before it (just as your own physician does, inestimable reader, as you will see, if you look at his next prescription), and departed, saying he would look in occasionally. After this, the Latin tutor began the usual course of “getting better,” until he got so much better that his face was very sharp, and when he smiled, three crescent lines showed at each side of his lips, and when he spoke, it was in a muffled whisper, and the white of his eye glistened as pearly as the purest porcelain—so much better, that he hoped—by spring—he — might be able — to — attend ——— to his class again. But he was recommended not to expose himself, and so kept his chamber, and occasionally, not having anything to do, his bed. The unmarried sister with whom he lived took care of him; and the child, now old enough to be manageable, and even useful in trifling offices, sat in the chamber or played about,

## THE PROFESSOR AT

Things could not go on so for ever, of course. One morning his face was sunken, and his hands were very, very cold. He was "better" he whispered, but ~~sadly~~ and faintly. After a while he grew restless, and seemed a little wandering. His mind ran on his classics, and fell back on the Latin grammar.

"Iris!" he said, "*filiola mea!*" The child knew this meant *my dear little daughter* as well as if it had been English. "Rainbow!"—for he would translate her name at times, "come to me, *veni*" and his lips went on automatically, and murmured "*vel venito!*" The child came and sat by his bedside, and took his hand, which she could not warm, but which shot its rays of cold all through her slender frame. But there she sat, looking steadily at him. Presently he opened his lips feebly, and whispered, "*Moribundus.*" She did not know what that meant, but she saw that there was something new and sad. So she began to cry; but presently remembering an old book that seemed to comfort him at times, got up, and brought a Bible in the Latin version, called the Vulgate. "Open it," he said, "I will read, *segnius irritant*, don't put the light out, ah! *hæret lateri*, I am going, *vale, vale, vale*, good-bye, good-bye, the Lord take care of my child! *Domine, audi—vel audito!*" His face whitened suddenly, and he lay still, with open eyes and mouth. He had taken his last degree.

—Little Miss Iris could not be said to begin life with a very brilliant rainbow over her, in a worldly point of view. A limited wardrobe of man's attire, such as poor tutors wear,—a few good books, principally classics,—a print or two, and a plaster model of the Pantheon, with some pieces of furniture which had seen service,—these, and a child's heart full of tearful recollections and strange doubts and questions, alternating with the cheap pleasures which are the anodynes of childish grief; such were the treasures she inherited. No, I forgot. With that kindly sentiment which all of us feel for old men's first children—frost-flowers of the early winter season—the old tutor's students had remembered him at a time when he was laughing and crying with his new parental emotions, and running to the side of the plain crib in which his *alter ego*, as he used to say, was swinging, to hang over the little heap of stirring clothes, from which looked the minute, red, downy, still, round face, with unfixed eyes and working lips,—in that unearthly gravity which has never yet been broken by a smile, and which gives to the earliest moon-year or two of an infant's life the character of a *first old age*, to counterpoise that *second childhood* which there is one chance in a dozen it may reach by-and-by. The boys had remembered the old man and young father at that tender period of his hard, dry life. There came to him a fair, silver goblet, embossed with classical figures, and

bearing on a shield the graven words, *ex dono pupillorum*. The handle on its side showed what use the boys had meant it for, and a kind letter in it, written with the best of feeling, in the worst of Latin, pointed delicately to its destination. Out of this silver vessel, after a long, desperate, strangling cry, which marked her first great lesson in the realities of life, the child took the blue milk, such as poor tutors and their children get, tempered with water, and sweetened a little, so as to bring it nearer the standard established by the touching indulgence and partiality of nature who has mingled an extra allowance of sugar in the blameless food of the child at its mother's breast, as compared with that of its infant brothers and sisters of the bovine race.

But a willow will grow in baked sand wet with rain-water ; an air-plant will grow by feeding on the winds. Nay, those huge forests that overspread great continents have built themselves up mainly from the air-currents with which they are always battling. The oak is but a foliated atmospheric crystal deposited from the ærial ocean that holds the future vegetable world in solution. The storm that tears its leaves has paid tribute to its strength, and it breasts the tornado clad in the spoils of a hundred hurricanes.

Poor little Iris? What had she in common with the great oak in the shadow of which we are losing sight of her? She lived and grew like that—this was all. The blue milk ran into her veins, and filled them with thin, pure blood. Her skin was fair, with a faint tinge, such as the white rosebud shows before it opens. The doctor who had attended her father was afraid her aunt would hardly be able to “raise” her—“delicate child”—hoped she was not consumptive—thought there was a fair chance she would take after her father.

A very forlorn-looking person, dressed in black, with a white neckcloth, sent her a memoir of a child who had died at the age of two years and eleven months, after having fully indorsed all the doctrines of the particular persuasion to which he not only belonged himself, but thought it very shameful that everybody else did not belong. What with foreboding looks and dreary death-bed stories, it was a wonder the child made out to live through it. It saddened her early years, of course, it distressed her tender soul with thoughts, which, as they cannot be fully taken in, should be sparingly used as instruments of torture to break down the natural cheerfulness of a healthy child, or, what is infinitely worse, to cheat a dying one out of the kind illusions with which the Father of All has strewed its downward path.

The child would have died, no doubt, and, if properly managed, might have added another to the long catalogue of

wasting children who have been as cruelly played upon by spiritual physiologists, often with the best intentions, as ever the subject of a rare disease by the curious students of science.

Fortunately for her, however, a wise instinct had guided the late Latin tutor in the selection of the partner of his life, and the future mother of his child. The deceased tutoress was a tranquil, smooth woman, easily nourished, as such people are—a quality which is inestimable in a tutor's wife—and so it happened that the daughter inherited enough vitality from the mother to live through childhood and infancy, and fight her way towards womanhood, in spite of the tendencies she derived from her other parent.

—Two and two do not always make four, in this matter of hereditary descent of qualities. Sometimes they make three, and sometimes five. It seems as if the parental traits at one time showed separate, at another blended, that occasionally the force of two natures is represented in the derivative one by a diagonal of greater value than either original line of living movement; that sometimes there is a loss of vitality hardly to be accounted for, and again a forward impulse of variable intensity in some new and unforeseen direction.

So it was with this child. She had glanced off from her parental probabilities at an unexpected angle. Instead of taking to classical learning like her father, or sliding quietly into household duties like her mother, she broke out early in efforts that pointed in the direction of art. As soon as she could hold a pencil she began to sketch outlines of objects round her with a certain air and spirit. Very extraordinary horses, but their legs looked as if they could move. Birds unknown to Audubon, yet flying, as it were, with a rush. Men with impossible legs, which yet did seem to have a vital connection with their most improbable bodies. By-and-by the doctor, on his beast—an old man with a face looking as if Time had kneaded it like dough with his knuckles, with a rhubarb tint and flavour pervading himself and his sorrel horse and all their appurtenances. A dreadful old man! Be sure she did not forget those saddle-bags that held the detestable bottles out of which he used to shake those loathsome powders which, to virgin childish palates that find heaven in strawberries and peaches, are——. Well, I suppose I had better stop. Only she wished she was dead sometimes when she heard him coming. On the next leaf would figure the gentleman with the black coat and white cravat, as he looked when he came and entertained her with stories concerning the death of various little children about her age, to encourage her, as that wicked Mr. Arouet said *about shooting Admiral Byng*. Then she would take her

pencil, and, with a few scratches there would be the outline of a child, in which you might notice how one sudden sweep gave the chubby cheek, and two dots darted at the paper looked like real eyes.

By-and-by she went to school, and caricatured the school-master on the leaves of her grammars and geographies, and drew the faces of her companions, and, from time to time, heads and figures from her fancy, with large eyes, far apart, like those of Raffaele's mothers and children, sometimes with wild floating hair, and then with wings and heads thrown back in ecstasy. This was at about twelve years old, as the dates of these drawings show, and, therefore, three or four years before she came among us. Soon after this time, the ideal figures began to take the place of portraits and caricatures, and a new feature appeared in her drawing-books in the form of fragments of verse and short poems.

It was dull work, of course, for such a young girl to live with an old spinster and go to a village school. Her books bore testimony to this ; for there was a look of sadness in the faces she drew, and a sense of weariness and longing for some imaginary conditions of blessedness or other, which began to be painful. She might have gone through this flowering of the soul, and, casting her petals, subsided into a sober, human berry, but for the intervention of friendly assistance and counsel.

In the town where she lived was a lady of honourable condition, somewhat past middle age, who was possessed of pretty ample means, of cultivated tastes, of excellent principles, of exemplary character, and of more than common accomplishments. The gentleman in black broadcloth and white neckerchief only echoed the common voice about her, when he called her, after enjoying, beneath her hospitable roof, an excellent cup of tea, with certain elegancies and luxuries he was unaccustomed to, "The Model of all the Virtues."

She deserved this title as well as almost any woman. She did really bristle with moral excellences. Mention any good thing she had not done ; I should like to see you try ! There was no handle of weakness to take hold of her by ; she was as unseizable, except in her totality, as a billiard-ball ; and on the broad, green, terrestrial table, where she had been knocked about, like all of us, by the cue of Fortune, she glanced from every human contact, and "caromed" from one relation to another, and rebounded from the stuffed cushion of temptation, with such exact and perfect angular movements, that the Enemy's corps of Reporters had long given up taking notes of her conduct, as there was no chance for their master.

Catharine, child of a neighbour, curly and rosy-red  
 (Wedded since, and a widow—something like ten years dead),  
 Hearing a gush of music, such as none before,  
 Steals from her mother's chamber and peeps at the open door.

Just as the "Jubilate" in threaded whisper dies,  
 "Open it ! open it, lady !" the little maiden cries  
 (For she thought 'twas a singing creature caged in a box she heard),  
 "Open it ! open it, lady ! and let me see the *bird* !"

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#### IV.

I DON'T know whether our literary or professional people are more amiable than they are in other places, but certainly quarrelling is out of fashion among them. This could never be, if they were in the habit of secret anonymous puffing of each other. That is the kind of underground machinery which manufactures false reputations and genuine hatreds. On the other hand, I should like to know if we are not liberty to have a good time together, and say the pleasantest things we can think of to each other, when any of us reaches his thirtieth or fortieth or fiftieth or eightieth birthday.

We don't have "scenes," I warrant you, on these occasions. No "surprise" parties ! You understand these, of course. In the rural districts, where scenic tragedy and melodrama cannot be had, as in the city, at the expense of a quarter and a white pocket-handkerchief, emotional excitement has to be sought in the dramas of real life. Christenings, weddings, and funerals, especially the latter, are the main dependence ; but babies, brides, and deceased citizens cannot be had at a day's notice. Now, then, for a surprise-party !

A bag of flour, a barrel of potatoes, some strings of onions, a basket of apples, a big cake and many little cakes, a jug of lemonade, a purse stuffed with bills of the more modest denominations, may, perhaps, do well enough for the properties in one of these private theatrical exhibitions. The minister of the parish, a tender-hearted, quiet, hard-working man, living on a small salary, with many children, sometimes pinched to feed and clothe them, praying fervently every day to be blest in his "basket and store," but sometimes fearing he asks amiss, to judge by the small returns, has the first *rôle*,—not, however, by his own choice, but forced upon him. The minister's wife, a sharp-eyed, unsentimental body, is first lady ; the remaining parts by the rest of the family. If they only had a playbill, it would run thus :—

ON TUESDAY NEXT  
WILL BE PRESENTED  
THE AFFECTING SCENE,  
CALLED  
THE SURPRISE-PARTY;  
OR,  
THE OVERCOME FAMILY;

WITH THE FOLLOWING STRONG CAST OF CHARACTERS:—

*The Rev. Mr. Overcome*, by the Clergyman of this Parish.

*Mrs. Overcome*, by his estimable Lady.

*Masters Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John Overcome*,

*Misses Dorcas, Tabitha, Rachel, and Hannah Overcome*, by their interesting Children.

*Peggy*, by the Female Help.

The poor man is really grateful; it is a most welcome and unexpected relief. He tries to express his thanks,—his voice falters, he chokes—and bursts into tears. *That* is the great effect of the evening. The sharp-sighted lady cries a little with one eye, and counts the strings of onions, and the rest of the things, with the other. The children stand ready for a spring at the apples. The female help weeps after the noisy fashion of untutored handmaids.

Now this is all very well as charity, but do let the kind visitors remember they get their money's worth. If you pay a quarter for *dry crying*, done by a second-rate actor, how much ought you to pay for real hot, wet tears, out of the honest eyes of a gentleman who is not acting, but sobbing in earnest?

All I meant to say, when I began, was that this was *not* a surprise-party where I read these few lines that follow:—

We will not speak of years to-night;  
For what have years to bring,  
But larger floods of love and light  
And sweeter songs to sing?

We will not drown in wordy praise  
The kindly thoughts that rise;  
If friendship owns one tender phrase,  
He reads it in our eyes.

We need not waste our schoolboy art  
To gild this notch of time;  
Forgive me, if my wayward heart  
Has throbbed in artless rhyme.



Enough for him the silent grasp  
That knits us hand-in-hand,  
And he the bracelet's radiant clasp  
That locks our circling band.

Strength to his hours of manly toil !  
Peace to his starlit dreams !  
Who loves alike the furrowed soil,  
The music-haunted streams !

Sweet smiles to keep for ever bright  
The sunshine on his lips,  
And faith, that sees the ring of light  
Round Nature's last eclipse !

—One of our boarders has been talking in such strong language that I am almost afraid to report it. However, as he seems to be really honest, and is so very sincere in his local prejudices, I don't believe any body will be very angry with him

It is here, sir ! right here ! said the little deformed gentleman, in this old new city of Boston—this remote provincial corner of a provincial nation, that the Battle of the Standard is fighting, and was fighting before we were born, and will be fighting when we are dead and gone—please God ! The *battle* goes on everywhere throughout civilization ; but here, here, here ! is the broad white flag flying which proclaims, first of all, peace and good-will to men, and, next to that, the absolute, unconditional spiritual liberty of each individual immortal soul ! The three-hilled city against the seven-hilled city ! That is it, sir,—nothing less than that ; and if you know what that means, I don't think you'll ask for anything more. I swear to you, sir, I believe that these two centres of civilization are just exactly the two points that close the circuit in the battery of our planetary intelligence ! and I believe there are spiritual eyes looking out from Uranus and unseen Neptune,—ay, sir, from the systems of Sirius and Arcturus and Aldebaran, and as far as that faint stain of sprinkled worlds confluent in the distance that we call the nebula of Orion,—looking on, sir, with what organs I know not, to see which are going to melt in that fiery fusion, the accidents and hindrances of humanity or man himself, sir, the stupendous abortion, the illustrious failure that he is, if the three-hilled city does not ride down and trample out the seven-hilled city !

—Steam's up ! said the young man John, so called, in a low tone. Three hundred and sixty-five tons to the square inch. Let him blow her off, or he'll bu'st his b'iler.

The Divinity Student took it calmly, only whispering that he

thought there was a little confusion of images between a galvanic battery and a charge of cavalry.

But the Koh-i-noor—the gentleman, you remember, with a very large *diamond* in his shirt-front—laughed his scornful laugh, and made as if to speak. •

Sail in, Metropolis! said that same young man, John by name. And then, in a lower tone, not meaning to be heard, Now then, Ma'am Allen.

But he *was* heard; and the Koh-i-noor's face turned so white with rage, that his blue-black moustache and beard looked fearful, seen against it. He grinned with wrath, and caught at a tumbler, as if he would have thrown it or its contents at the speaker. The young Marylander fixed his clear, steady eye upon him, and laid his hand on his arm, carelessly almost, but the Jewel found it was held so that he could not move it. It was of no use. The youth was his master in muscle, and in that deadly Indian hug in which men wrestle with their eyes; over in five seconds, but breaks one of their two backs, and is good for three-score years and ten, one trial enough,—settles the whole matter,—just as when two feathered songsters of the barnyard, game and dunghill, come together,—after a jump or two at each other, and a few sharp kicks, there is the end of it; and it is, *Après vous, monsieur*, with the beaten party in all the social relations for all the rest of his days.

I cannot philosophically account for the Koh-i-noor's wrath. For though a cosmetic is sold, bearing the name of the lady to whom reference was made by the young person John, yet, as it is publicly asserted in respectable prints that this cosmetic is *not a dye*, I see no reason why he should have felt offended by any suggestion that he was indebted to it or its authoress. I have no doubt that there are certain exceptional complexions to which the purple tinge, above alluded to, is natural. Nature is fertile in variety. I saw an albiness in London once, for sixpence (including the inspection of a stuffed boa-constrictor), who looked as if she had been boiled in milk. A young Hottentot of my acquaintance had his hair all in little pellets of the size of marrowfat peas. One of my own classmates has undergone a singular change of late years, his hair losing its original tint, and getting a remarkable discoloured look; and another has ceased to cultivate any hair at all over the vertex or crown of the head. So I am perfectly willing to believe that the purple-black of the Koh-i-noor's moustache and whiskers is constitutional and not pigmentary. But I can't think why he got so angry.

The intelligent reader will understand that all this pantomime of the threatened onslaught and its suppression passed so quickly that it was all over by the time the other end of the

table found out there was a disturbance ; just as a man chopping wood half a mile off may be seen resting on his axe at the instant you hear the last blow he struck. So you will please to observe that the Little Gentleman was not interrupted during the time implied by these *ex-post-facto* remarks of mine, but for some ten or fifteen seconds only.

He did not seem to mind the interruption at all, for he started again. The "sir" of his harangue was no doubt addressed to myself more than anybody else, but he often uses it in discourse as if he were talking with some imaginary opponent.

—America, sir, he exclaimed, is the only place where man is full-grown !

He straightened himself up, as he spoke, standing on the top round of his high chair, I suppose, and so presented the larger part of his little figure to the view of the boarders.

It was next to impossible to keep from laughing. The commentary was so strange an illustration of the text.

I thought it was time to put in a word ; for I have lived in foreign parts, and am more or less cosmopolitan.

I doubt if we have more practical freedom in America than they have in England, I said. An Englishman thinks as he likes in religion and politics. Mr. Martineau speculates as freely as ever Dr. Channing did, and Mr. Bright is as independent as Mr. Seward.

Sir, said he, it isn't what a man thinks or says, but when and where and to whom he thinks and says it. A man with a flint-and-steel striking sparks over a wet blanket is one thing, and striking them over a tinder box is another. The free Englishman is born under protest ; he lives and dies under protest—a tolerated, but not a welcome fact. Is not *freethinker* a term of reproach in England ? The same idea in the soul of an Englishman who struggled up to it and still holds it *antagonistically*, and in the soul of an American to whom it is congenital and spontaneous, and often unrecognized, except as an element blended with *all* his thoughts, a natural movement, like the drawing of his breath, or the beating of his heart, is a very different thing. You may teach a quadruped to walk on his hind legs, but he is always wanting to be on all-fours. Nothing that can be taught a growing youth is like the atmospheric knowledge he breathes from his infancy upwards. The American baby sucks in freedom with the milk of the breast at which he hangs.

—That's a good joke, said the young fellow John,—considerin' it commonly belongs to a female Paddy.

I thought, I will not be certain that the Little Gentleman winked, as if he had been hit somewhere—as I have no doubt Dr. Darwin did when the *wooden-spoon* suggestion upset his

theory about why, &c. If he winked, however, he did not dodge.

A lively comment! he said. But Rome, in her great founder, sucked the blood of empire out of the dugs of a brute, sir! The Milesian wet-nurse is only a convenient vessel through which the American infant gets the life-blood of this virgin soil, sir, that is making man over again, on the sunset pattern! You don't think what we are doing and going to do here. Why, sir, while commentators are bothering themselves with interpretation of prophecies, *we have got* the new heavens and the new earth over us and under us! Was there ever anything in Italy I should like to know, like a Boston sunset?

—This time there was a laugh, and the Little Man himself almost smiled.

Yes, Boston sunsets! perhaps they're as good in some other places, but I know 'em best here. Anyhow, the American skies are different from anything they see in the old world. Yes, and the rocks are different, and the soil is different, and everything that comes out of the soil, from grass up to Indians, is different. And now that the provisional races are dying out—

—What do you mean by the *provisional* races, sir? said the Divinity-Student, interrupting him.

Why, the aboriginal bipeds, to be sure, he answered, the red-crayon sketch of humanity laid on the canvas before the colours for the real manhood were ready.

I hope they will come to something yet, said the Divinity-Student.

Irreclaimable, sir, irreclaimable! said the Little Gentleman. Cheaper to breed white men than domesticate a nation of red ones. When you can get the bitter out of the partridge's thigh, you can make an enlightened commonwealth of Indians. A provisional race, sir, nothing more. Exhaled carbonic acid for the use of vegetation, kept down the bears and catamounts, enjoyed themselves in scalping and being scalped, and then passed away, or are passing away, according to the programme.

Well, sir, these races dying out, the white man has to acclimate himself. It takes him a good while; but he will come all right by-and-by, sir—as sound as a woodchuck—as sound as a musquash!

A new nursery, sir, with Lake Superior, and Huron, and all the rest of 'em for wash-basins! A new race, and a whole new world for the new-born human soul to work in! And Boston is the brain of it, and has been any time these hundred years! That's all I claim for Boston, that it is the thinking centre of the continent, and therefore of the planet.

—And the grand emporium of modesty, said the Divinity-Student, a little mischievously.

Oh, don't talk to me of modesty ! answered the Little Gentleman,—I'm past that ! There isn't a thing that was ever said or done in Boston, from pitching the tea overboard to the last ecclesiastical lie it tore into tatters, and flung into the dock, that wasn't thought very indelicate by some fool, or tyrant, or bigot, and all the entrails of commercial and spiritual conservatism are twisted into colics as often as this revolutionary brain of ours has a fit of thinking come over it. No, sir, show me any other place that is, or was since the megalosaurus has died out, where wealth and social influence are so fairly divided between the stationary and the progressive classes ! Show me any other place where every other drawing-room is not a chamber of the Inquisition, with papas and mammas for inquisitors, and the cold shoulder, instead of the "dry pan and the gradual fire," the punishment of "heresy !

—We think *Baltimore* is a pretty civilized kind of a village, said the young Marylander, good-naturedly. But I suppose you can't forgive it for always keeping a little ahead of Boston in point of numbers ; tell me the truth now—Are we not the centre of something ?

Ah, indeed, to be sure you are. You are the gastronomic metropolis of the Union. Why don't you put a canvas-back duck on the top of the Washington column ? Why don't you get that lady off from Battle Monument and plant a terrapin in her place ? Why will you ask for other glories when you have soft crabs ? No, sir, you live too well to think as hard as we do in Boston. Logic comes to us with the salt-fish of Cape Ann ; rhetoric is born of the beans of Beverly ; but *you*, if you open your mouths to speak, Nature stops them with a fat oyster, or offers a slice of the breast of your divine bird, and silences all your aspirations.

And what of Philadelphia ? said the Marylander.

Oh, Philadelphia ? Waterworks, killed by the Croton and Cochituate ; Ben Franklin—borrowed from Boston ; David Rittenhouse—made an orrery ; Benjamin Rush—made a medical system—both interesting to antiquarians ;—great Red-river raft of medical students,—spontaneous generation of professors to match : more widely known through the Moyamensing Hose-Company, and the Wistar parties ;—for geological section of socialstra ta, go to *The Club*. Good place to live in, first-rate market, tip-top peaches. What do we know about Philadelphia, except that the engine-companies are always shooting each other.

And what do you say to Ne' York ? asked the Koh-i-noor.

A great city, sir, replied the Little Gentleman, a very

opulent, splendid city. A point of transit of much that is remarkable, and of permanence for much that is respectable. A great money-centre. San Francisco, with the mines above-ground, and some of 'em under the side-walks. I have seen next to nothing *grandiose*, out of New York, in all our cities. It makes 'em all look paltry and petty. Has many elements of civilization. May stop where Venice did, though, for aught we know. The order of its development is just this: Wealth; architecture; upholstery; painting; sculpture. Printing, as a mechanical art, just as Nicholas Jenson and the Aldi, who were scholars too, made Venice renowned for it. Journalism, which is the accident of business and crowded populations, in great perfection. Venice got as far as Titian and Paul Veronese and Tintoretto,—great colourists, mark you, magnificent on the flesh-and-blood side of Art,—but look over to Florence and see who lie in Santa Croce, and ask out of whose loins Dante sprung!

Oh, yes, to be sure, Venice built her Ducal Palace, and her Church of St. Mark, and her Casa d'Oro, and the rest of her golden houses; and Venice had great pictures and good music; and Venice had a Golden Book, in which all the large taxpayers had their names written;—But all that did not make Venice the brain of Italy.

I tell you what, sir,—with all these magnificent appliances of civilization, it is time we began to hear something from the *jeunesse dorée* whose names are on the Golden Book of our sumptuous, splendid, marble-palaced Venice—something in the higher walks of literature—something in the councils of the nation. Plenty of Art, I grant you, sir; now, then, for vast libraries, and for mighty scholars and thinkers and statesmen—five for every Boston one, as the population is to ours,—*ten* to one more properly, in virtue of centralizing attraction as *the* alleged metropolis,—and not call our people provincials, and have to come begging to us to write the lives of Hendrik Hudson and Gouverneur Morris!

—The Little Gentleman was on his hobby, exalting his own city at the expense of every other place. I have my doubts if he had been in either of the cities he had been talking about. I was just going to say something to sober him down, if I could, when the young Marylander spoke up.

Come now, he said, what's the use of these comparisons? Didn't I hear this gentleman saying, the other day, that every American owns all America? If you have really got more brains in Boston than other folks, as you seem to think, who hates you for it, except a pack of scribbling fools? If I like Broadway better than Washington-Street, what then? I own them both, as much as anybody owns either. I am an Ameri-

can,—and wherever I look up and see the stars and stripes overhead, that is home to me !

He spoke, and looked up as if he heard the emblazoned folds crackling over him in the breeze. We all looked up involuntarily, as if we should see the national flag by so doing. The sight of the dingy ceiling, and the gas-fixture depending therefrom, dispelled the illusion.

Bravo ! bravo ! said the Venerable Gentleman on the other side of the table. Those are the sentiments of Washington's Farewell Address. Nothing better than that since the last chapter in Revelations. Five-and-forty years ago there used to be Washington societies, and little boys used to walk in processions, each little boy having a copy of the Address, bound in red, hung round his neck by a ribbon. Why don't they now ? Why don't they now ? I saw enough of hating each other in the old Federal times ; now let's love each other, I say,—let's love each other, and not try to make it out that there isn't any place fit to live in except the one we happen to be born in.

It dwarfs the mind, I think, said I, to feed it on any localism. The full stature of manhood is shrivelled—

The colour burst up into my cheeks. What was I saying—I, who would not for the world have pained our unfortunate little boarder by an allusion ?

I will go, he said, and made a movement with his left arm to let himself down from his high chair.

No, no, he doesn't mean it, you must not go, said a kind voice next him ; and a soft, white hand was laid upon his arm.

Iris, my dear ! exclaimed another voice, as of a female, in accents that might be considered a strong atmospheric solution of duty, with very little flavour of grace.

She did not move for this address, and there was a *tableau* that lasted some seconds. For the young girl, in the glory of half-blown womanhood, and the dwarf, the cripple, the misshapen little creature covered with Nature's insults, looked straight into each other's eyes.

Perhaps no handsome young woman had ever looked at him so in his life. Certainly the young girl never had looked into eyes that reached into her soul as these did. It was not that they were in themselves supernaturally bright, but there was the sad fire in them that flames up from the soul of one who looks on the beauty of woman without hope, but, alas ! not without emotion. To him it seemed as if those amber gates had been translucent as the brown water of a mountain-brook, and through them he had seen dimly into a virgin wilderness only waiting for the sunrise of a great passion for all its buds *to blow and all its bowers to ring with melody.*



That is my image, of course, not his. It was not a simile that was in his mind, or is in anybody's at such a moment, it was a pang of wordless passion, and then a silent, inward moan.

A lady's wish, he said, with a certain gallantry of manner,—makes slaves of us all. And Nature, who is kind to all her children, and never leaves the smallest and saddest of all her human failures without one little comfit of self-love at the bottom of his poor ragged pocket—Nature suggested to him that he had turned his sentence well ; and he fell into a reverie, in which the old thoughts that were always hovering just outside the doors guarded by Common Sense, and watching for a chance to squeeze in, knowing perfectly well they would be ignominiously kicked out again as soon as Common Sense saw them, flocked in pellmell—misty, fragmentary, vague, half-ashamed of themselves, but still shouldering up against his inner consciousness till it warmed with their contact :—John Wilkes's—the ugliest man in England—saying, that with half-an-hour's start he would cut out the handsomest man in all the land in any woman's good graces ; Cadenus, old and savage, leading captive Stella and Vanessa ; and then the stray line of a ballad, "And a winning tongue had he," as much as to say, it isn't looks after all, but cunning words, that win our Eves over, just as of old, when it was the worst-looking brute of the lot that got our grandmother to listen to his stuff, and so did the mischief.

Ah, dear me ! We rehearse the part of Hercules with his club, subjugating man and woman in our fancy, the first by the weight of it, and the second by our handling of it,—we rehearse it, I say, by our own hearth-stones, with the *cold* poker as our club, and the exercise is easy. But when we come to real life, the poker is *in the fire*, and, ten to one, if we would grasp it, we find it too hot to hold ;—lucky for us, if it is not white-hot, and we do not have to leave the skin of our hands sticking to it when we fling it down, or drop it with a loud or silent cry !

—I am frightened when I find into what a labyrinth of human character and feeling I am winding. I meant to tell my thoughts, and to throw in a few studies of manner and costume as they pictured themselves for me from day to day. Chance has thrown together at the table with me a number of persons who are worth studying, and I mean not only to look on them, but, if I can, through them. You can get any man's or woman's secret, whose sphere is circumscribed by your own, if you will only look patiently on them long enough. Nature is always applying her re-agents to character, if you will take the pains to watch her. Our studies of character, to change the image, are very much like the surveyor's triangulation of a geographical province. We get a base-line in organization always ; then we



get an angle by sighting some distant object to which the passions or inspirations of the subject of our observation are tending ; then another ;—and so we construct our first triangle. Once fix a man's ideals, and for the most part the rest is easy. A wants to die worth half a million. Good. B (female) wants to catch him,—and outlive him. All right. Minor details at our leisure.

What is it, of all your experiences, of all your thoughts, of all your misdoings, that lies at the very bottom of the great heap of acts of consciousness which make up your past life ? What should you most dislike to tell your nearest friend ? Be so good as to pause for a brief space, and shut the volume you hold, with your finger between the pages. Oh, that is it !

What a confessional I have been sitting at, with the inward ear of my soul open, as the multitudinous whisper of my involuntary confidants came back to me like the reduplicated echo of a cry among the craggy hills !

At the house of a friend where I once passed the night was one of those stately upright cabinet-desks and cases of drawers which were not rare in prosperous families during the last century. It had held the clothes and the books and the papers of generation after generation. The hands that opened its drawers had grown withered, shrivelled, and at last been folded in death. The children that played with the lower handles had got tall enough to open the desk—to reach the upper shelves behind the folding-doors, grown bent after a while, and then followed those who had gone before, and left the old cabinet to be ransacked by a new generation.

A boy of ten or twelve was looking at it a few years ago, and, being a quick-witted fellow, saw that all the space was not accounted for by the smaller drawers in the part beneath the lid of the desk. Prying about with busy eyes and fingers, he at length came upon a spring, on pressing which, a secret drawer flew from its hiding-place. It had never been opened but by the maker. The mahogany shavings and dust were lying in it as when the artisan closed it, and when I saw it, it was as fresh as if that day finished.

Is there not one little drawer in your soul, my sweet reader, which no hand but yours has ever opened, and which none that have known you seem to have suspected ? What does it hold ? A sin ? I hope not.

What a strange thing an old dead sin laid away in a secret drawer of the soul is ! Must it some time or other be moistened with tears, until it comes to life again and begins to stir in our consciousness, as the dry wheel-animalcule, looking like a grain of dust, becomes alive, if it is wet with *a drop of water*.

Or is it a passion? there are plenty of withered men and women walking about the streets who have the secret drawer in their hearts, which, if it were opened, would show as fresh as it was when they were in the flush of youth and its first trembling emotions. What it held will, perhaps, never be known, until they are dead and gone, and some curious eye lights on an old yellow letter with the fossil footprints of the extinct passion trodden thick all over it.

There is not a boarder at our table, I firmly believe, excepting the young girl, who has not a story of the heart to tell, if one could only get the secret drawer open. Even this arid female, whose armour of black bombazine looks stronger against the shafts of love than any cuirass of triple brass, has had her sentimental history, if I am not mistaken. I will tell you my reason for suspecting it.

Like many other old women, she shows a great nervousness and restlessness whenever I venture to express any opinion upon a class of subjects which can hardly be said to belong to any man or set of men as their strictly private property,—not even to the clergy, or the newspapers commonly called “religious.” Now, although it would be a great luxury to me to obtain my opinions by contract, ready-made, from a professional man, and although I have a constitutional kindly feeling to all sorts of good people which would make me happy to agree with all their beliefs, if that were possible, still I must have an idea, now and then, as to the meaning of life; and though the only condition of peace in this world is to have no ideas, or, at least, not to express them, with reference to such subjects, I can’t afford to pay quite so much as that even for peace.

I find that there is a very prevalent opinion among the dwellers on the shores of Sir Isaac Newton’s Ocean of Truth, that *salt fish*, which have been taken from it a good while ago, split open, cured, and dried, are the only proper and allowable food for reasonable people. I maintain, on the other hand, that there are a number of live fish still swimming in it, and that every one of us has a right to see if he cannot catch some of them. Sometimes I please myself with the idea that I have landed an actual living fish, small, perhaps, but with rosy gills and silvery scales. Then I find the consumers of nothing but the salted and dried article insist that it is poisonous, simply because it is alive, and cry out to people not to touch it. I have not found, however, that people mind them much.

The poor boarder in bombazine is my dynamometer. I try every questionable proposition on her. If she winces, I must be prepared for an outcry from the other old women. I frightened her, the other day, by saying that *faith, as an intellectual state, was self-reliance*, which, if you have a metaphysical turn,

you will find is not so much of a paradox as it sounds at first. So she sent me a book to read which was to cure me of that error. It was an old book, and looked as if it had not been opened for a long time. What should drop out of it, one day, but a small heart-shaped paper, containing a lock of that straight, coarse, brown hair, which sets off the sharp faces of so many thin-flanked, large-handed bumpkins? I read upon the paper the name "Hiram." Love! love! love!—everywhere! everywhere!—under diamonds and housemaids' "jewelry,"—lifting the marrowy camel's-hair, and rustling even the black bombazine! No, no, I think she never was pretty, but she was young once, and wore bright gingham, and, perhaps, gay merinos. We shall find that the poor little crooked man has been in love, or is in love, or will be in love before we have done with him, for aught that I know!

Romance! Was there ever a boarding-house in the world where the seemingly prosaic table had not a living fresco for its background, where you could see, if you had eyes, the smoke and fire of some upheaving sentiment, or the dreary craters of smouldering or burnt-out passions? You look on the black bombazine and high-necked decorum of your neighbour, and no more think of the real life that underlies this despoiled and dismantled womanhood than you think of a stone trilobite as having once been full of the juices and the nervous thrills of throbbing and self-conscious being. There is a wild creature under that long yellow pin which serves as brooch for the bombazine cuirass—a wild creature which I venture to say would leap in his cage, if I should stir him, quiet as you think him. A heart which has been domesticated by matrimony and maternity is as tranquil as a tame bullfinch; but a wild heart, which has never been fairly broken in, flutters fiercely long after you think Time has tamed it down,—like that purple finch I had the other day, which could not be approached without such palpitations and frantic flings against the bars of his cage, that I had to send him back and get a little orthodox canary which had learned to be quiet and never mind the wires or his keeper's handling. I will tell you my wicked, but half involuntary, experiment on the wild heart under the faded bombazine.

Was there ever a person in the room with you, marked by any special weakness or peculiarity, with whom you could be two hours and not touch the infirm spot? I confess the most frightful tendency to do just this thing. If a man has a brogue, I am sure to catch myself imitating it. If another is lame, I follow him, or, worse than that, go before him, limping. I could never meet an Irish gentleman—if it had been the Duke of Wellington himself—without stumbling upon the word "*Paddy*," which I use rarely in my common talk.

I have been worried to know whether this was owing to some innate depravity of disposition on my part, some malignant torturing instinct, which, under different circumstances, might have made a Fijian anthropophagus of me, or to some law of thought for which I was not answerable. It is, I am convinced, a kind of physical fact like *endosmosis*, with which some of you are acquainted. A thin film of politeness separates the unspoken and unspeakable current of thought from the stream of conversation. After a time one begins to soak through and mingle with the other.

We were talking about names, one day. Was there ever anything, I said, like the Yankee for inventing the most uncouth, pretentious, detestable appellations, inventing or finding them, since the time of Praise God Barebones? I heard a country-boy once talking of another whom he called *Elpit*, as I understood him. *Elbridge* is common enough, but this sounded oddly. It seems the boy was christened *Lord Pitt*, and called, for convenience, as above. I have heard a charming little girl, belonging to an intelligent family in the country, called *Angēs* invariably; doubtless intended for Agnes. Names are cheap. How can a man name an innocent new-born child, that never did him any harm, *Hiram*? The Poor Relation, or whatever she is, in bombazine, turned towards me, but I was stupid, and went on. To think of a man going through life saddled with such an abominable name as that! The Poor Relation grew very uneasy. I continued; for I never thought of all this till afterwards. I knew one young fellow, a good many years ago, by the name of Hiram——

——What's got into you, Cousin, said our landlady, to look so?—There! you've upset your teacup?

It suddenly occurred to me what I had been doing, and I saw the poor woman had her hand at her throat; she was half-choking with the "hysteric ball,"—a very odd symptom, as you know, which nervous women often complain of. What business had I to be trying experiments on this forlorn old soul? I had a great deal better be watching that young girl.

Ah the young girl! I am sure that she can hide nothing from me. Her skin is so transparent that one can almost count her heart-beats by the flushes they send into her cheeks. She does not seem to be shy, either. I think she does not know enough of danger to be timid. She seems to me like one of those birds that travellers tell of, found in remote, uninhabited islands, who, having never received any wrong at the hand of man, show no alarm at and hardly any particular consciousness of his presence.

The first thing will be to see how she and our little Deformed Gentleman get along together; for, as I have told you, they sit

side by side. The next thing will be to keep an eye on the duenna,—the “Model,” and so forth, as the White-neck-cloth called her. The intention of that estimable lady is, I understand, to launch her and leave her. I suppose there is no help for it, and I don’t doubt this young lady knows how to take care of herself, but I do not like to see young girls turned loose in boarding-houses. Look here, now! There is that jewel of his race, whom I have called, for convenience, the Koh-i-noor (you understand it is quite out of the question for me to use the family names of our boarders, unless I want to get into trouble,)—I say, the gentleman with the *diamond* is looking very often and very intently, it seems to me, down toward the farther corner of the table, where sits our amber-eyed blonde. The Landlady’s Daughter does not look pleased, it seems to me, at this, nor at those other attentions which the gentleman referred to has, as I have learned, pressed upon the newly-arrived young person. The Landlady made a communication to me, within a few days after the arrival of Miss Iris, which I will repeat to the best of my remembrance.

He (the person I have been speaking of), she said, seemed to be kinder hankerin’ round after that young woman. It had hurt her daughter’s feelin’s a good deal, that the gentleman she was a-keepin’ company with should be offerin’ tickets and tryin’ to send presents to them that he’d never know’d till just a little spell ago,—and he as good as merried, so fur as solemn promises went, to as respectable a young lady, if she did say so, as any there was round, whosomever they might be.

Tickets! presents! said I. What tickets what presents has he had the impertinence to be offering to that young lady?

Tickets to the Múseum, said the Landlady. There is them that’s glad enough to go to the Múseum, when tickets is given ’em; but some of ’em ha’n’t had a ticket sence Cenderilla was played, and now he must be offerin’ ’em to this ridiculous young paintress, or whatever she is, that’s come to make more mischief than her board’s worth. But it a’n’t her fault, said the Landlady, relenting;—and that aunt of hers, or whatever she is, served him right enough.

Why, what did she do?

Do? Why, she took it up in the tongs and dropped it out o’ winder.

Dropped? Dropped what? I said.

Why, the *soap*, said the Landlady.

It appeared that the Koh-i-noor, to ingratiate himself, had sent an elegant package of perfumed soap, directed to Miss Iris, as a delicate expression of a lively sentiment of admiration, and *that, after having met with the unfortunate treatment referred to,*

it was picked up by Master Benjamin Franklin, who appropriated it, rejoicing, and indulged in most unheard-of and inordinate ablutions in consequence, so that his hands were a frequent subject of maternal congratulation, and he smelt like a civet-cat for weeks after his great acquisition.

After watching daily for a time, I think I can see clearly into the relation which is growing up between the Little Gentleman and the young lady. She shows a tenderness to him that I can't help being interested in. If he was her crippled child, instead of being more than old enough to be her father, she could not treat him more kindly. The Landlady's Daughter said, the other day, she believed that girl was settin' her cap for the Little Gentleman.

Some of them young folks is very artful, said her mother, and there is them that would merry Lazarus, if he'd only picked up crumbs enough. I don't think, though, this is one of that sort; she's kinder childlike, said the Landlady, and, maybe, never had any dolls to play with; for they say her folks was poor before Ma'am undertook to see to her teachin' and board her and clothe her.

I could not help overhearing this conversation. "Board her and clothe her!"—speaking of such a young creature! Oh, dear! Yes, she must be fed—just like Bridget, maid-of-all-work at this establishment. Somebody must pay for it. Somebody has a right to watch her and see how much it takes to "keep" her, and growl at her, if she has too good an appetite. Somebody has a right to keep an eye on her, and take care that she does not dress too prettily. No mother to see her own youth over again in those fresh features and rising reliefs of half-sculptured womanhood; and, seeing its loveliness, forget her lessons of neutral-tinted propriety, and open the cases that hold her own ornaments to find for her a necklace, or a bracelet, or a pair of ear-rings, those golden lamps that light up the deep, shadowy dimples on the cheeks of young beauties, swinging in a semi-barbaric splendour that carries the wild fancy to Abyssinian queens and musky Odalisques! I don't believe any woman has utterly given up the great firm of Mundus & Co., so long as she wears ear-rings.

I think Iris loves to hear the Little Gentleman talk. She smiles sometimes at his vehement statements, but never laughs at him. When he speaks to her, she keeps her eye always steadily upon him. This may be only natural good-breeding, so to speak, but it is worth noticing. I have often observed that vulgar persons, and public audiences of inferior collective intelligence, have this in common: the least thing draws off their minds, when you are speaking to them. I love this young creature's rapt attention to her diminutive neighbour while he is speaking.

He is evidently pleased with it. For a day or two after she came, he was silent and seemed nervous and excited. Now he is fond of getting the talk into his own hands, and is obviously conscious that he has at least one interested listener. Once or twice I have seen marks of special attention to personal adornment,—a ruffled shirt-bosom, one day, and a diamond pin in it—not so *very* large as the Koh-i-noor's, but more lustrous. I mentioned the death's-head ring he wears on his right hand. I was attracted by a very handsome red stone, a ruby or carbuncle, or something of that sort, to notice his left hand, the other day. It is a handsome hand, and confirms my suspicion that the cast mentioned was taken from his arm. After all, this is just what I should expect. It is not very uncommon to see the upper limbs, or one of them, running away with the whole strength, and, therefore, with the whole beauty, which we should never have noticed, if it had been divided equally between all four extremities. If it is so, of course he is proud of his one strong and beautiful arm; that is human nature. I am afraid he can hardly help betraying his favouritism, as people who have any one showy point are apt to do—especially dentists with handsome teeth, who always smile back to their last molars.

Sitting, as he does, next to the young girl, and next but one to the calm lady who has her in charge, he cannot help seeing their relations to each other.

That is an admirable woman, sir, he said to me one day, as we sat alone at the table after breakfast—an admirable woman, sir, and I hate her.

Of course, I begged an explanation.

An admirable woman, sir, because she does good things, and even kind things—takes care of this—this—young lady—we have here, talks like a sensible person, and always looks as if she was doing her duty with all her might. I hate her because her voice sounds as if it never trembled, and her eyes look as if she never knew what it was to cry. Besides, she looks at me, sir, stares at me, as if she wanted to get an image of me for some gallery in her brain,—and we don't love to be looked at in this way, we that have——. I hate her—I hate her—her eyes kill me;—it is like being stabbed with icicles to be looked at so; the sooner she goes home, the better. I don't want a woman to weigh me in a balance; there are men enough for that sort of work. The judicial character isn't captivating in females, sir. A woman fascinates a man quite as often by what she overlooks as by what she sees. Love prefers twilight to daylight; and a man doesn't think much of, nor care much for, a woman outside of his household, unless he can couple the idea of love, past, present, or future, with her. I don't believe the devil would give half as much for the services of a sinner as he

would for those of one of these folks that are always doing virtuous acts in a way to make them unpleasing. That young girl wants a tender nature to cherish her and give her a chance to put out her leaves—sunshine, and not east winds.

He was silent, and sat looking at his handsome left hand, with the red stone ring upon it. Is he going to fall in love with Iris?

Here are some lines I read to the boarders the other day :—

**THE CROOKED FOOTPATH.**

AH, here it is? the sliding rail  
That marks the old-remembered spot :  
The gap that struck our schoolboy trail—  
The crooked path across the lot.

It left the road by school and church,  
A pencilled shadow, nothing more,  
That parted from the silver birch  
And ended at the farmhouse door.

No line or compass traced its plan ;  
With frequent bends to left or right,  
In aimless, wayward curves it ran,  
But always kept the door in sight.

The gabled porch, with woodbine green,  
The broken millstone at the sill,  
Though many a rood might stretch between,  
The truant child could see them still.

No rocks across the pathway lie,  
No fallen trunk is o'er it thrown,  
And yet it winds, we know not why,  
And turns as if for tree or stone.

Perhaps some lover trod the way  
With shaking knees and leaping heart,  
And so it often runs astray  
With sinuous sweep or sudden start.

Or one, perchance, with clouded brain  
From some unholy banquet reeled,  
And since, our devious steps maintain  
His track across the trodden field.

Nay, deem not thus—no earthborn wil  
Could ever trace a faultless line ;  
Our truest steps are human still—  
To walk unswerving were divine !

Truants from love, we dream of wrath ;  
Oh, rather let us trust the more !  
Through all the wanderings of the path,  
We still can see our Father's door !



## V.

## THE PROFESSOR FINDS A FLY IN HIS TEACUP.

I HAVE a long theological talk to relate, which must be dull reading to some of my young and vivacious friends. I don't know, however, that any of them have entered into a contract to read all that I write, or that I have promised always to write to please them. What if I should sometimes write to please myself?

Now you must know that there are a great many things which interest me, to some of which this or that particular class of readers may be totally indifferent. I love Nature, and human nature, its thoughts, affections, dreams, aspirations, delusions—Art in all its forms—*virtu* in all its eccentricities—old stories from black-letter volumes and yellow manuscripts, and new projects out of hot brains not yet imbedded in the snows of age. I love the generous impulses of the reformer; but not less does my imagination feed itself upon the old Litanies, so often warmed by the human breath upon which they were wafted to Heaven that they glow through our frames like our own heart's blood. I hope I love good men and women; I know that they never speak a word to me, even if it be of question or blame, that I do not take pleasantly, if it is expressed with a reasonable amount of human kindness.

I have before me at this time a beautiful and affecting letter, which I have hesitated to answer, though the postmark upon it gave its direction, and the name is one which is known to all, in some of its representatives. It contains no reproach, only a delicately-hinted fear. Speak gently, as this dear lady has spoken, and there is no heart so insensible that it does not answer to the appeal, no intellect so virile that it does not own a certain deference to the claims of age, of childhood, of sensitive and timid natures, when they plead with it not to look at those sacred things by the broad daylight which they see in mystic shadow. How grateful would it be to make perpetual peace with these pleading saints and their confessors, by the simple act that silences all complainings! Sleep, sleep, sleep! says the Arch-Enchantress of them all, and pours her dark and potent anodyne, distilled over the fires that consumed her foes, its large round drops changing, as we look, into the beads of her convert's rosary! Silence! the pride of reason! cries another, whose whole life is spent in reasoning down reason.

I hope I love good people, not for their sake, but for my own. And most assuredly, if any deed of wrong or word of bitter-

ness led me into an act of disrespect towards that enlightened and excellent class of men who make it their calling to teach goodness and their duty to practise it, I should feel that I had done myself an injury rather than them. Go and talk with any professional man holding any of the mediæval creeds, choosing one who wears upon his features the mark of inward and outward health, who looks cheerful, intelligent, and kindly, and see how all your prejudices melt away in his presence! It is impossible to come into intimate relations with a large, sweet nature, such as you may often find in this class, without longing to be at one with it in all its modes of being and believing. But does it not occur to you that one may love truth as he sees it, and his race as he views it, better than even the sympathy and approbation of many good men whom he honours, better than sleeping to the sound of the *Miserere*, or listening to the repetition of an effete Confession of Faith?

The three learned professions have but recently emerged from a state of *quasi*-barbarism. None of them like too well to be told of it, but it must be sounded in their ears whenever they put on airs. When a man has taken an overdose of laudanum, the doctors tell us to place him between two persons who shall make him walk up and down incessantly; and if he still cannot be kept from going to sleep, they say that a lash or two over his back is of great assistance.

So we must keep the doctors awake by telling them that they have not yet shaken off astrology and the doctrine of signatures, as is shown by the form of their prescriptions, and their use of nitrate of silver, which turns epileptics into Ethiopians. If that is not enough, they must be given over to the scourgers, who like their task and get good fees for it. A few score years ago, sick people were made to swallow burnt toads, and powdered earthworms, and the expressed juice of wood-lice. The physician of Charles I. and II. prescribed abominations not to be named. Barbarism, as bad as that of Congo or Ashantee. Traces of this barbarism linger even in the greatly improved medical science of our century. So while the solemn farce of over-drugging is going on, the world over, the harlequin pseudo-science jumps on to the stage, whip in hand, with half a dozen somersets, and begins laying about him.

In 1817, perhaps you remember, the law of wager by battle was unrepealed, and the rascally murderous, and worse than murderous, clown, Abraham Thornton, put on his gauntlet in open court, and defied the appellant to lift the other which he threw down. It was not until the reign of George II. that the statutes against witchcraft were repealed. As for the English Court of Chancery, we know that its antiquated abuses form one of the staples of common proverbs and popular literature. So

the laws and the lawyers have to be watched perpetually by public opinion as much as the doctors do.

I don't think the other profession is an exception. When the Reverend Mr. Cauvin and his associates burned my distinguished scientific brother—he was burned with green fagots, which made it rather slow and painful—it appears to me they were in a state of religious barbarism. The dogmas of such people about the Father of Mankind and His creatures are of no more account in my opinion than those of a council of Aztecs. If a man picks your pocket, do you not consider him thereby disqualified to pronounce any authoritative opinion on matters of ethics? If a man hangs my ancient female relatives for sorcery, as they did in this neighbourhood a little while ago, or burns my instructor for not believing as he does, I care no more for his religious edicts than I should for those of any other barbarian.

Of course, a barbarian may hold many true opinions; but when the ideas of the healing art, of the administration of justice, of Christian love, could not exclude systematic poisoning, judicial duelling, and murder for opinion's sake, I do not see how we can trust the verdict of that time relating to any subject which involves the primal instincts violated in these abominations and absurdities. What if we are even now in a state of *semi-barbarism*?

Perhaps some think we ought not to talk at table about such things. I am not so sure of that. Religion and government appear to me the two subjects which, of all others, should belong to the common talk of people who enjoy the blessings of freedom. Think, one moment. The earth is a great factory-wheel, which, at every revolution on its axis, receives fifty thousand raw souls and turns off nearly the same number worked up more or less completely. There must be somewhere a population of two hundred thousand million, perhaps ten or a hundred times as many, earth-born intelligences. *Life*, as we call it, is nothing but the edge of the boundless ocean of existence where it comes on soundings. In this view, I do not see anything so fit to talk about, or half so interesting, as that which relates to the innumerable majority of our fellow-creatures, the dead-living, who are hundreds of thousands to one of the live-living, and with whom we all potentially belong, though we have got tangled for the present in some parcels of fibrine, albumen, and phosphates, that keep us on the minority side of the house. In point of fact, it is one of the many results of *Spiritualism* to make the permanent destiny of the race a matter of common reflection and discourse, and a vehicle for the prevailing disbelief of the Middle-Age doctrines on the subject. I cannot help thinking, *when I remember* how many conversations my friend and my-

self have reported, that it would be very extraordinary, if there were no mention of that class of subjects which involves all that we have, and all that we hope, not merely for ourselves, but for the dear people whom we love best—noble men, pure and lovely women, ingenious children—about the destiny of nine-tenths of whom you know the opinions that would have been taught by those old-man-roasting, woman-strangling dogmatists. However, I fought this matter with one of our boarders the other day, and I am going to report the conversation.

The Divinity-Student came down, one morning, looking rather more serious than usual. He said little at breakfast-time, but lingered after the others, so that I, who am apt to be long at the table, found myself alone with him.

When the rest were all gone, he turned his chair round towards mine, and began.

I am afraid, he said, you express yourself a little too freely on a most important class of subjects. Is there not danger in introducing discussions or allusions relating to matters of religion into common discourse?

Danger to what? I asked.

Danger to Truth, he replied, after a slight pause.

I didn't know Truth was such an invalid, I said. How long is it since she could only take the air in a close carriage, with a gentleman in a black coat on the box? Let me tell you a story, adapted to young persons, but which won't hurt older ones.

—There was a very little boy who had one of those balloons you may have seen, which are filled with light gas, and are held by a string to keep them from running off in æronautic voyages on their own account. This little boy had a naughty brother, who said to him, one day, Brother, pull down your balloon, so that I can look at it and take hold of it. Then the little boy pulled it down. Now the naughty brother had a sharp pin in his hand, and he thrust it into the balloon, and all the gas oozed out, so that there was nothing left but a shrivelled skin.

One evening, the little boy's father called him to the window to see the moon, which pleased him very much; but presently he said, Father, do not pull the string, and bring down the moon, for my naughty brother will prick it, and then it will all shrivel up and we shall not see it any more.

Then his father laughed, and told him how the moon had been shining a good while, and would shine a good while longer, and that all we could do was to keep our windows clean, never letting the dust get too thick on them, and especially to keep our eyes open, but that we could not pull the moon down with a string, nor prick it with a pin. Mind you this, too, the moon is no man's private property, but is seen from a good many parlour windows.

—Truth is tough. It will not break, like a bubble at a touch ; nay, you may kick it about all day, like a football, and it will be round and full at evening. Does not Mr. Bryant say that Truth gets well if she is run over by a locomotive, while Error dies of lockjaw if she scratches her finger ? I never heard that a mathematician was alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition. I think, generally, that fear of open discussion implies feebleness of inward conviction, and great sensitiveness to the expression of individual opinion is a mark of weakness.

—I am not so much afraid for truth, said the Divinity-Student, as for the conceptions of truth in the minds of persons not accustomed to judge wisely the opinions uttered before them.

Would you, then, banish all allusions to matters of this nature from the society of people who come together habitually ?

I would be very careful in introducing them, said the Divinity-Student.

Yes, but friends of yours leave pamphlets in people's entries, to be picked up by nervous misses and hysteric housemaids, full of doctrines these people do not approve. Some of your friends stop little children in the street, and give them books, which their parents, who have had them baptized into the Christian fold, and give them what they consider proper religious instruction, do not think fit for them. One would say it was fair enough to talk about matters thus forced upon people's attention.

The Divinity-Student could not deny that this was what might be called opening the subject to the discussion of intelligent people.

But, he said, the greatest objection is this, that persons who have not made a professional study of theology are not competent to speak on such subjects. Suppose a minister were to undertake to express opinions on medical subjects, for instance, would you not think he was going beyond his province ?

I laughed, for I remembered John Wesley's "sulphur and supplication," and so many other cases where ministers had meddled with medicine—sometimes well and sometimes ill, but, as a general rule, with a tremendous lurch to quackery, owing to their very loose way of admitting evidence—that I could not help being amused.

I beg your pardon, I said, I do not wish to be impolite, but I was thinking of their certificates to patent medicines. Let us look at this matter.

If a minister had attended lectures on the theory and practice of medicine, delivered by those who had studied it most deeply, for thirty or forty years, at the rate of from fifty to one hundred

a year—if he had been constantly reading and hearing read the most approved text-books on the subject—if he had seen medicine actually practised according to different methods, daily, for the same length of time—I should think, that if a person of average understanding, he *was* entitled to express an opinion on the subject of medicine, or else that his instructors were a set of ignorant and incompetent charlatans.

If, before a medical practitioner would allow me to enjoy the full privileges of the healing art, he expected me to affirm my belief in a considerable number of medical doctrines, drugs, and formulæ, I should think that he thereby implied my right to discuss the same, and my ability to do so, if I knew how to express myself in English.

Suppose, for instance, the Medical Society should refuse to give us an opiate, or to set a broken limb, until we had signed our belief in a certain number of propositions, of which we will say this is the first:—

I. All men's teeth are naturally in a state of total decay or caries, and, therefore, no man can bite until every one of them is extracted and a new set is inserted according to the principles of dentistry adopted by this Society.

I, for one, should want to discuss that before signing my name to it, and I should say this:—Why, no, that isn't true. There are a good many bad teeth, we all know, but a great many more good ones. You mustn't trust the *dentists*; they are all the time looking at the people who have bad teeth, and such as are suffering from toothache. The idea that you must pull out every one of every nice young man and young woman's natural teeth! Poh, poh! nobody believes that. This tooth must be straightened, that must be filled with gold, and this other perhaps extracted; but it must be a very rare case, if they are all so bad as to require extraction; and if they are, don't blame the poor soul for it! Don't tell us, as some old dentists used to, that everybody not only always has every tooth in his head good for nothing, but that he ought to have his head cut off as a punishment for that misfortune! No, I can't sign Number One. Give us Number Two.

II. We hold that no man can be well who does not agree with our views of the efficacy of calomel, and who does not take the doses of it prescribed in our tables, as there directed.

To which I demur, questioning why it should be so, and get for answer the two following:—

III. Every man who does not take our prepared calomel, as prescribed by us in our Constitution and By-Laws, is and must be a mass of disease from head to foot; it being self-evident that he is simultaneously affected with Apoplexy, Arthritis, Ascites, Asphyxia, and Atrophy; with Borborygmus, Bronchitis,

and Bulimia ; with Cachexia, Carcinoma, and Cretinismus : and soon through the alphabet, to Xerophthalmia and Zona, with all possible and incompatible diseases which are necessary to make up a totally morbid state ; and he will certainly die, if he does not take freely of our prepared calomel, to be obtained only of one of our authorized agents.

IV. No man shall be allowed to take our prepared calomel who does not give in his solemn adhesion to each and all of the above-named and the following propositions (from ten to a hundred) and show his mouth to certain of our apothecaries, who have *not* studied dentistry, to examine whether all his teeth have been extracted and a new set inserted according to our regulations.

Of course, the doctors have a right to say we shan't have any rhubarb, if we don't sign their articles, and that, if, after signing them, we express doubts (in public) about any of them, they will cut us off from our jalap and squills,—but then to ask a fellow not to discuss the propositions before he signs them is what I should call boiling it down a little *too* strong !

If we understand them, why can't we discuss them ? If we can't understand them, because we haven't taken a medical degree, what the Father of Lies do they ask us to sign them for ?

Just so with the graver profession. Every now and then some of its members seem to lose common sense and common humanity. The laymen have to keep setting the divines right constantly. Science, for instance—in other words, knowledge—is not the enemy of religion ; for, if so, then religion would mean ignorance. But it is often the antagonist of school-divinity.

Everybody knows the story of early astronomy and the school-divines. Come down a little later. Archbishop Usher, a very learned Protestant prelate, tells us that the world was created on Sunday, the twenty-third of October, four thousand and four years before the birth of Christ. Deluge. December 7th, two thousand three hundred and forty-eight years B.C. Yes, and the earth stands on an elephant, and the elephant on a tortoise. One statement is as near the truth as the other.

Again, there is nothing so brutalizing to some natures as *moral surgery*. I have often wondered that Hogarth did not add one more picture to his four stages of Cruelty. Those wretched fools, reverend divines and others, who were strangling men and women for imaginary crimes a little more than a century ago among us, were set right by a layman, and very angry it made them to have him meddle.

The good people of Northampton had a very remarkable man



for their clergyman,—a man with a brain as nicely adjusted for certain mechanical processes as Babbage's calculating machine. The commentary of the laymen on the preaching and practising of Jonathan Edwards was, that, after twenty-three years of endurance, they turned him out by a vote of twenty to one, and passed a resolve that he should never preach for them again. A man's logical and analytical adjustments are of little consequence compared to his primary relations with nature and truth ; and people have sense enough to find it out in the long run ; they know what "logic" is worth.

In that miserable delusion referred to above, the reverend Aztecs and Fijians argued rightly enough from their premises, no doubt, for many men can do this. But common sense and common humanity were unfortunately left out from their premises, and a layman had to supply them. A hundred more years, and many of the barbarisms still lingering among us will, of course, have disappeared like witch-hanging. But people are sensitive now, as they were then. You will see by this extract that the Rev. Cotton Mather did not like intermeddling with his business very well. "Let the *Levites* of the Lord keep close to their instructions," he says, "and *God will smite thro' the loins of those that rise up against them*. I will report unto you a Thing which many Hundreds among us know to be true. The *Godly Minister* of a certain Town in Connecticut, when he had occasion to be absent on a *Lord's Day* from his Flock, employ'd an honest *Neighbour* of some small talents for a *Mechanick*, to read a *Sermon* out of some *good Book* unto 'em. This *Honest*, whom they ever counted also a *Pious Man*, had so much conceit of his *Talents*, that instead of *Reading a Sermon* appointed, he, to the *Surprize* of the people, fell to *preaching one of his own*. For his Text he took these Words, '*Despise not Prophecys*'; and in his Preachment he betook himself to bewail the *Envy of the Clergy* in the land, in that they did not wish *all the Lord's People to be Prophets*, and call forth *Private Brethren* publickly to *prophesie*. While he was thus in the midst of his Exercise, God smote him with horrible *Madness*; he was taken ravingly distracted ; the People were forc'd with violent Hands to carry him home. . . . I will not mention his Name: He was reputed a Pious Man." This is one of Cotton's "Remarkable Judgments of God, on Several Sorts of Offenders," and the next cases referred to are the Judgments on the "Abominable Sacrilege" of not paying the Ministers' Salaries.

This sort of thing doesn't do here and now, you see, my young friend ! We talk about our free institutions ; they are nothing but a coarse outside machinery to secure the freedom of individual thought. The President of the United States is only the engine-driver of our broad-gauge mail train ; and



every honest, independent thinker has a seat in the first-class cars behind him.

—There is something in what you say, replied the Divinity-Student; and yet it seems to me that there are places and times where disputed doctrines of religion should not be introduced. You would not attack a Church dogma—say, Total Depravity—in a lyceum-lecture, for instance?

Certainly not; I should choose another place, I answered. But, mind you, at this table I think it is very different. I shall express my ideas on any subject I like. The laws of the lecture-room, to which my friends and myself are always amenable, do not hold here. I shall not often give arguments, but frequently opinions—I trust with courtesy and propriety, but, at any rate, with such natural forms of expression as it has pleased the Almighty to bestow upon me.

A man's opinions, look you, are generally of much more value than his arguments. These last are made by his brain, and perhaps he does not believe the proposition they tend to prove—as is often the case with paid lawyers; but opinions are formed by our whole nature—brain, heart, instinct, brute life, everything all our experience has shaped for us by contact with the whole circle of our being.

—There is one thing more, said the Divinity-Student, that I wish to speak of; I mean that idea of yours, expressed some time since, of *depolarizing* the text of sacred books in order to judge them fairly. May I ask why you do not try the experiment yourself?

Certainly, I replied, if it gives you any pleasure to ask foolish questions. I think the ocean telegraph-wire ought to be laid, and will be laid, but I don't know that you have any right to ask me to go and lay it. But, for that matter, I have heard a good deal of Scripture depolarized in and out of the pulpit. I heard the Rev. Mr. F. once depolarize the story of the Prodigal Son in Park-Street Church. Many years afterwards, I heard him repeat the same, or a similar depolarized version in Rome, New York. I heard an admirable depolarization of the story of the young man who "had great possessions," from the Rev. Mr. H., in another pulpit, and felt that I had never half understood it before. All paraphrases are more or less perfect depolarizations. But I tell you this: the faith of our Christian community is not robust enough to bear the turning of our most sacred language into its depolarized equivalents. You have only to look back to Dr. Channing's famous Baltimore discourse, and remember the shrieks of blasphemy with which it was greeted, to satisfy yourself on this point. Time, time only, can gradually wean us from our *Epeolatry*, or word-worship, by spiritualizing our ideas of the thing signi-

fied. Man is an idolater or symbol-worshipper by nature, which, of course, is no fault of his ; but, sooner or later, all his local and temporary symbols must be ground to powder, like the golden calf—word-images as well as metal and wooden ones. Rough work, Iconoclasm—but the only way to get at Truth. It is, indeed, as that quaint and rare old discourse “A Summons for Sleepers,” hath it, “no doubt a thankless office, and a verie unthrifitie occupation; *veritas odium parit*, Truth never goeth without a scratcht face ; he that will be busie with *væ vobis*, let him looke shortly for *coram nobis*.”

The very aim and end of our institutions is just this : that we may think what we like and say what we think.

—Think what we like ! said the Divinity-Student ;—think what we like ! What ! against all human and divine authority ?

Against all human versions of its own or any other authority. At our own peril always, if we do not *like* the right, but not at the risk of being hanged and quartered for political heresy, or broiled on green fagots for ecclesiastical treason ! Nay, we have got so far, that the very word *heresy* has fallen into comparative disuse among us.

And now, my young friend, let us shake hands and stop our discussion, which we will not make a quarrel. I trust you know, or will learn, a great many things in your profession which we common scholars do not know ; but mark this : when the common people of New England stop talking politics and theology, it will be because they have got an Emperor to teach them the one, and a Pope to teach them the other !

That was the end of my long conference with the Divinity-Student. The next morning we got talking a little on the same subject, very good-naturedly, as people return to a matter they have talked out.

You must look to yourself, said the Divinity-Student, if your democratic notions get into print. You will be fired into from all quarters.

If it were only a bullet, with the marksman's name on it, I said. I can't stop to pick out the peep-shot of anonymous scribblers.

Right, sir ! right ! said the Little Gentleman. The scamps ! I know the fellows. They can't give fifty cents to one of the Antipodes, but they must have it jingled along through everybody's palms all the way, till it reaches him, and forty cents of it get spilt, like the water out of the fire-buckets passed along a “lane” at a fire ; but when it comes to anonymous defamation, putting lies into people's mouths, and then advertising those people through the country as the authors of them, oh, then it is that they let not their left hand know what their right hand doeth !

I don't like Ehud's style of doing business, sir. He comes along with a very sanctimonious look, sir, with his "secret errand unto thee," and his "message from God unto thee," and then pulls out his hidden knife with that unsuspected left hand of his (the Little Gentleman lifted his clenched left hand with the blood-red jewel on the ring-finger), and runs it, blade and haft, into a man's stomach ! Don't meddle with these fellows, sir. They are read mostly by persons whom you would not reach, if you were to write ever so much. Let 'em alone. A man whose opinions are not attacked is beneath contempt.

I hope so, I said. I got three pamphlets and innumerable squibs flung at my head for attacking one of the pseudo-sciences, in former years. When, by the permission of Providence, I held up to the professional public the damnable facts connected with the conveyance of poison from one young mother's chamber to another's, for doing which humble office I desire to be thankful that I have lived, though nothing else good should ever come of my life, I had to bear the sneers of those whose position I had assailed, and, as I believe, have at last demolished, so that nothing but the ghosts of dead women stir among the ruins. What would you do, if the folks without names kept at you, trying to get a San Benito on to your shoulders that would fit you? Would you stand still in fly-time, or would you give a kick now and then?

Let 'em bite ! said the Little Gentleman ; let 'em bite ! It makes 'em hungry to shake 'em off, and they settle down again as thick as ever, and twice as savage. Do you know what meddling with the folks without names, as you call 'em, is like ? It is like riding at the *quintain*. You run full tilt at the board, but the board is on a pivot with a bag of sand on an arm that balances it. The board gives way as soon as you touch it ; and before you have got by, the bag of sand comes round whack on the back of your neck. "Ananias," for instance, pitches into your lecture, we will say, in some paper taken by the people in your kitchen. Your servants get saucy and negligent. If their newspaper calls you names, they need not be so particular about shutting doors softly or boiling potatoes. So you lose your temper, and come out in an article which you think is going to finish "Ananias," proving him a booby who doesn't know enough to understand even a lyceum-lecture, or else a person that tells lies. Now you think you've got him ! Not so fast. "Ananias" keeps still, and winks to "Shimei," and "Shimei" comes out in the paper which they take in your neighbour's kitchen, ten times worse than t'other fellow. If you meddle with "Shimei," he steps out, and next week appears "Rab-sha-keh," an unsavoury wretch ; and now, at any rate, you find out *what good sense* there was in Hezekiah's "Answer him not."

No, no, keep your temper. So saying, the Little Gentleman doubled his left fist, and looked at it, as if he should like to hit something or somebody a most pernicious punch with it.

Good ! said I. Now let me give you some axioms I have arrived at, after seeing something of a great many kinds of good folks.

—Of a hundred people of each of the different leading religious sects, about the same proportion will be safe and pleasant persons to deal and to live with.

—There are, at least, three real saints among the women, to one among the men, in every denomination.

—The spiritual standard of different classes I would reckon thus :—

1. The comfortably rich.
2. The decently comfortable.
3. The very rich, who are apt to be irreligious.
4. The very poor, who are apt to be immoral.

—The cut nails of machine-divinity may be driven in, but they won't clinch.

—The arguments which the greatest of our schoolmen could not refute were two : the blood in men's veins, and the milk in women's breasts.

—Humility is the first of the virtues—for other people.

—Faith always implies the disbelief of a lesser fact in favour of a greater. A little mind often sees the unbelief, without seeing the belief, of a large one.

The Poor Relation had been fidgeting about and working her mouth while all this was going on. She broke out in speech at this point.

I hate to hear folks talk so. I don't see that you are any better than a heathen.

I wish I were half as good as many heathens have been, I said. Dying for a principle seems to me a higher degree of virtue than scolding for it ; and the history of heathen races is full of instances where men have laid down their lives for the love of their kind, of their country, of truth, nay, even for simple manhood's sake, or to show their obedience or fidelity. What would not such beings have done for the souls of men, for the Christian Commonwealth, for the King of Kings, if they had lived in days of larger light ? Which seems to you nearest Heaven, Socrates drinking his hemlock, Regulus going back to the enemy's camp, or that old New England divine sitting comfortably in his study and chuckling over his conceit of certain poor women who had been burned to death in his own town, going "roaring out of one fire into another?"

I don't believe he said any such thing, replied the Poor Relation.

It is hard to believe, said I, but it is true for all that. In another hundred years it will be as incredible that men talked as we sometimes hear them now.

*Pectus est quod facit theologum.* The heart makes the theologian. Every race, every civilization, either has a new revelation of its own or a new interpretation of an old one. Democratic America has a different humanity from feudal Europe, and so must have a new divinity. See, for one moment, how intelligence reacts on our faiths. The Bible was a divining-book to our ancestors, and is so still in the hands of some of the vulgar. The Puritans went to the Old Testament for their laws; the Mormons go to it for their patriarchal institution. Every generation dissolves something new, and precipitates something once held in solution from that great storehouse of temporary and permanent truths.

You may observe this: that the conversation of intelligent men of the stricter sects is strangely in advance of the formulæ that belong to their organizations. So true is this, that I have doubts whether a large proportion of them would not have been rather pleased than offended, if they could have overheard our talk. For, look you, I think there is hardly a professional teacher who will not in private conversation allow a large part of what we have said, though it may frighten him in print; and I know well what an under-current of secret sympathy gives vitality to those poor words of mine which sometimes get a hearing.

I don't mind the exclamation of any old stager who drinks Madeira worth from two to six Bibles a bottle, and burns, according to his own premisses, a dozen souls a year in the cigars with which he muddles his brains. But as for the good and true and intelligent men whom we see all around us, laborious, self-denying, hopeful, helpful,—men who know that the active mind of the century is tending more and more to the two poles, Rome and Reason, the sovereign Church or the free soul, authority or personality, God in us or God in our masters, and that, though a man may by accident *stand* half-way between these two points, he must *look* one way or the other—I don't believe they would take offence at anything I have reported of our late conversation.

But supposing any one *do* take offence at first sight, let him look over these notes again, and see whether he is quite sure he does not agree with most of these things that were said amongst us. If he agrees with most of them, let him be patient with an opinion he does not accept, or an expression or illustration a little too vivacious. I don't know that I shall report any more conversations on these topics; but I do insist on the right to express a civil opinion on this class of subjects without giving

fience, just when and where I please,—unless, as in the lecture-room, there is an implied contract to keep clear of doubtful matters. You didn't think a man could sit at a breakfast-table doing nothing but making puns every morning for a year or two, and never give a thought to the two thousand of his fellow-creatures who are passing into another state during every hour that he sits talking and laughing ! Of course, the *one* matter that a real human being cares for is, what is going to become of them, and of him. And the plain truth is, that a good many people are saying one thing about it and believing another.

—How do I know that ? Why, I have known and loved to talk with good people, all the way from Rome to Geneva in doctrine, as long as I can remember. Besides, the real religion of the world comes from women much more than from men—from mothers most of all, who carry the key of our souls in their bosoms. It is in their hearts that the “sentimental” religion some people are so fond of sneering at has its source. The sentiment of love, the sentiment of maternity, the sentiment of the paramount obligation of the parent to the child as having called it into existence, enhanced just in proportion to the power and knowledge of the one and the weakness and ignorance of the other—these are the “sentiments” that have kept our soulless systems from driving men off to die in holes, like those that riddle the sides of the hill opposite the Monastery of St. Saba, where the miserable victims of a falsely-interpreted religion starved and withered in their delusion.

I have looked on the face of a saintly woman this very day, whose creed many dread and hate, but whose life is lovely and noble beyond all praise. When I remember the bitter words I have heard spoken against her faith, by men who have an Inquisition which excommunicates those who ask to leave their communion in peace, and an *Index Expurgatorius* on which this article may possibly have the honour of figuring,—and, far worse than these, the reluctant, Pharisaical confession, that it might perhaps be *possible* that one who so believed should be accepted of the Creator, and then recall the sweet peace and love that show through all her looks, the price of untold sacrifices and labours, and again recollect how thousands of women, filled with the same spirit, die, without a murmur, to earthly life, die to their own names even, that they may know nothing but their holy duties, while men are torturing and denouncing their fellows, and while we can hear day and night the clinking of the hammers that are trying, like the brute forces in the “Prometheus,” to rivet their adamantine wedges right through the breast of human nature—I have been ready to believe that we have even now a new revelation, and the name of its Messiah is WOMAN !

—I should be sorry, I remarked, a day or two afterwards, to the Divinity-Student, if anything I said tended in any way to foster any jealousy between the professions, or to throw disrespect upon that one on whose counsel and sympathies almost all of us lean in our moments of trial. But we are false to our new conditions of life, if we do not resolutely maintain our religious as well as our political freedom, in the face of any and all supposed monopolies. Certain men will, of course, say two things, if we do not take their views: first, that we don't know anything about these matters; and, secondly, that we are not so good as they are. They have a polarized phraseology for saying these things, but it comes to precisely that. To which it may be answered, in the first place, that we have good authority for saying that even babes and sucklings know *something*; and, in the second, that, if there is a mote or so to be removed from our premises, the courts and councils of the last few years have found beams enough in some other quarters, to build a church that would hold all the good people in Boston and have sticks enough left to make a bonfire for all the heretics.

As to that terrible depolarizing process of mine, of which we were talking the other day, I will give you a specimen of one way of managing it, if you like. I don't believe it will hurt you or anybody. Besides, I had a great deal rather finish our talk with pleasant images and gentle words, than with sharp sayings, which will only afford a text, if anybody repeats them, for endless relays of attacks from Messrs. Ananias, Shimei, and Rab-shakeh.

[I must leave such gentry, if any of them show themselves, in the hands of my clerical friends, many of whom are ready to stand up for the rights of the laity, and to those blessed souls the good women, to whom this version of the story of a mother's hidden hopes and tender anxieties is dedicated by their peaceful and loving servant.]

#### A MOTHER'S SECRET.

How sweet the sacred legend—if unblamed  
In my slight verse such holy things are named—  
Of Mary's secret hours of hidden joy,  
Silent, but pondering on her wondrous boy!  
*Ave, Maria!* Pardon, if I wrong  
Those heavenly words that shame my earthly song!

The choral host had closed the angel's strain  
Sung to the midnight watch on Bethlehem's plain;  
And now the shepherds, hastening on their way,  
Sought the still hamlet where the Infant lay.  
They passed the fields that gleaning Ruth toiled o'er,—  
*They saw afar the ruined threshing-floor*



Where Moab's daughter, homeless and forlorn,  
Found Boaz slumbering by his heaps of corn ;  
And some remembered how the holy scribe,  
Skilled in the lore of every jealous tribe,  
Traced the warm blood of Jesse's royal son  
To that fair alien, bravely wooed and won.  
So fared they on to seek the promised sign  
That marked the anointed heir of David's line.

At last, by forms of earthly semblance led,  
They found the crowded inn, the oxen's shed.  
No pomp was there, no glory shone around  
On the coarse straw that strewed the reeking ground  
One dim retreat a flickering torch betrayed—  
In that poor cell the Lord of Life was laid !

The wondering shepherds told their breathless tale  
Of the bright choir that woke the sleeping vale ;  
Told how the skies with sudden glory flamed ;  
Told how the shining multitude proclaimed  
" Joy, joy to earth ! Behold the hallowed morn !  
In David's city Christ the Lord is born !  
' Glory to God ! ' let angels shout on high,—  
' Good-will to men ! ' the listening Earth reply ! "

They spoke with hurried words and accents wild ;  
Calm in his cradle slept the heavenly Child.  
No trembling word the mother's joy revealed,—  
One sigh of rapture, and her lips were sealed ;  
Unmoved she saw the rustic train depart,  
But kept their words to ponder in her heart.

Twelve years had passed ; the boy was fair and tall,  
Growing in wisdom, finding grace with all.  
The maids of Nazareth, as they trooped to fill  
Their balanced urns beside the mountain-rill,—  
The gathered matrons, as they sat and spun,  
Spoke in soft words of Joseph's quiet son.  
No voice had reached the Galilean vale  
Of star-led kings or awe-struck shepherds' tale ;  
In the meek, studious child they only saw  
The future Rabbi, learned in Israel's law.

So grew the boy ; and now the feast was near,  
When at the holy place the tribes appear.  
Scarce had the home-bred child of Nazareth seen  
Beyond the hills that girt the village-green,  
Save when at midnight, o'er the star-lit sands,  
Snatched from the steel of Herod's murdering bands,  
A babe, close-folded to his mother's breast,  
Through Edom's wilds he sought the sheltering West.  
' Then Joseph spake : " Thy boy hath largely grown,  
Weave him fine raiment, fitting to be shown ;  
Fair robes beseeem the pilgrim, as the priest :  
Goes he not with us to the holy feast ? "

And Mary culled the flaxen fibres white ;  
Till eve she spun ; she spun till morning light ;  
The thread was twined ; its parting meshes through  
From hand to hand her restless shuttle flew.



Till the full web was wound upon the beam,—  
Love's curious toil,—a vest without a seam !

They reach the holy place, fulfil the days  
To solemn feasting given, and grateful praise.  
At last they turn, and fair Moriah's height  
Melts in the southern sky, and fades from sight.  
All day the dusky caravan has flowed  
In devious trails along the winding road—  
(For many a step their homeward path attends,  
And all the sons of Abraham are as friends).  
Evening has come—the hour of rest and joy ;—  
Hush ! hush !—that whisper,—“ Where is Mary's boy ?

O weary hour ! O aching days that passed  
Filled with strange fears, each wilder than the last  
The soldier's lance—the fierce centurion's sword—  
The crushing wheels that whirl some Roman lord—  
The midnight crypt that sucks the captive's breath—  
The blistering sun on Hinnom's vale of death !

Thrice on his cheek had rained the morning light,  
Thrice on his lips the mildewed kiss of night,  
Crouched by some porphyry column's shining plinth,  
Or stretched beneath the odorous terebinth.

At last, in desperate mood, they sought once more  
The Temple's porches, searched in vain before ;  
They found him seated with the ancient men—  
The grim old rufflers of the tongue and pen—  
Their bald heads glistening as they clustered near,  
Their gray beards slanting as they turned to hear,  
Lost in half-envious wonder and surprise  
That lips so fresh should utter words so wise.

And Mary said—as one who, tried too long,  
Tells all her grief and half her sense of wrong—  
“ What is this thoughtless thing which thou hast done ?  
Lo, we have sought thee sorrowing, O my son ! ”  
Few words he spake, and scarce of filial tone—  
Strange words, their sense a mystery yet unknown ;  
Then turned with them, and left the holy hill,  
To all their mild commands obedient still.

The tale was told to Nazareth's sober men,  
And Nazareth's matrons told it oft again ;  
The maids retold it at the fountain's side ;  
The youthful shepherds doubted or denied ;  
It passed around among the listening friends,  
With all that fancy adds and fiction lends,  
Till newer marvels dimmed the young renown  
Of Joseph's son, who talked the Rabbis down.

But Mary, faithful to its lightest word,  
Kept in her heart the sayings she had heard.  
Till the dread morning rent the Temple's veil,  
And shuddering Earth confirmed the wondrous tale.

Youth fades ; love droops ; the leaves of friendship fall ;  
A mother's secret hope outlives them all.

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## VI.

**Y**OU don't look so dreadful poor in the face as you did a while back. Bloated some, I expect.

This was the cheerful and encouraging and elegant remark with which the Poor Relation greeted the Divinity-Student one morning.

Of course every good man considers it a great sacrifice on his part to continue living in this transitory, unsatisfactory, and particularly unpleasant world. This is so much a matter of course that I was surprised to see the Divinity-Student change colour. He took a look at a small and uncertain-minded glass which hung slanting forward over the chapped sideboard. The image it returned to him had the colour of a very young pea somewhat over-boiled. The scenery of a long tragic drama flashed through his mind as the lightning-express-train *whishes* by a station: the gradual dismantling process of disease; friends looking on, sympathetic, but secretly chuckling over their own stomachs of iron and lungs of caoutchouc; nurses attentive, but calculating their crop, and thinking how soon it will be ripe, so that they can go to your neighbour, who is good for a year or so longer; doctors assiduous, but giving themselves a mental shake, as they go out of your door, which throws off your particular grief as a duck sheds a raindrop from his oily feathers: undertaker solemn, but happy; then the great subsoil cultivator, who plants, but never looks for fruit in his garden; then the stone-cutter, who finds the lie that has been waiting for you on a slab ever since the birds or beasts made their tracks on the new red sandstone; then the grass and the dandelions and the buttercups,—Earth saying to thy mortal body, with her sweet symbolism, “you have scarred my bosom, but you are forgiven;” then a glimpse of the soul as a floating consciousness without very definite form or place, but dimly conceived of as an upright column of vapour or mist several times larger than life-size so far as it could be said to have any size at all, wandering about and living a thin and half-awake life for want of good old-fashioned solid *matter* to come down upon with foot and fist,—in fact, having neither foot nor fist, nor conveniences for taking the sitting posture.

And yet the Divinity-Student was a good Christian, and those heathen images which remind one of the childlike fancies of the dying Adrian were only the efforts of his imagination to give shape to the formless, and position to the placeless. Neither did his thoughts spread themselves out and link themselves as I have displayed them. They came confusedly into his mind

like a heap of broken mosaics,—sometimes a part of the picture complete in itself, sometimes connected fragments, and sometimes only single severed stones.

They did not diffuse a light of celestial joy over his countenance. On the contrary, the Poor Relation's remark turned him pale, as I have said; and when the terrible wrinkled and jaundiced looking-glass turned him green in addition, and he saw himself in it, it seemed to him as if it were all settled, and his book of life were to be shut not yet half-read, and go back to the dust of the underground archives. He coughed a mild short cough, as if to point the direction in which his downward path was tending. It was an honest little cough enough, so far as appearances went. But coughs are ungrateful things. You find one out in the cold, take it up and nurse it and make everything of it, dress it up warm, give it all sorts of balsams and other food it likes, and carry it round in your bosom as if it were a miniature lapdog. And by-and-by its little bark grows sharp and savage, and—confound the thing! you find it is a wolf's whelp that you have got there, and he is gnawing in the breast where he has been nestling so long. The Poor Relation said that somebody's surrup was good for folks that were gettin' into a bad way.—The landlady had heard of desperate cases cured by cherry-pictorial.

Whiskey's the fellah, said the young man John. Make it into punch, cold at dinner-time 'n' hot at bed-time. I'll come up 'n' show you how to mix it. Haven't any of you seen the wonderful fat man exhibitin' down in Hanover Street?

Master Benjamin Franklin rushed into the dialogue with a breezy exclamation, that he had seen a great picter outside of the place where the fat man was exhibitin'. Tried to get in at half-price, but the man at the door looked at his teeth and said he was more'n ten years old.

It isn't two years, said the young man John, since that fat fellah was exhibitin' here as the Living Skeleton. Whiskey—that's what did it, real Burbon's the stuff. Hot water, sugar, 'n' jest a little shavin' of lemon-skin in it,—*skin*, mind you, none o' your juice; take it off thin—shape of one of them flat curls the factory-girls wear on the sides of their foreheads.

But I am a teetotaller, said the Divinity-Student, in a subdued tone;—not noticing the enormous length of the bow-string the young fellow had just drawn.

He took up his hat and went out.

I think you have worried that young man more than you meant, I said. I don't believe he will jump off one of the bridges, for he has too much principle; but I mean to follow him and see *where* he goes, for he looks as if his mind were made up to *something*.

I followed him at a reasonable distance. He walked doggedly along, looking neither to the right nor the left, turned into State Street, and made for a well-known Life Insurance Office. Luckily, the doctor was there and overhauled him on the spot. There was nothing the matter with him, he said, and he could have his life insured as a sound one. He came out in good spirits, and told me this soon after.

This led me to make some remarks the next morning on the manners of well-bred and ill-bred people.

I began,—The whole essence of true gentle-breeding (one does not like to say gentility) lies in the wish and the art to be agreeable. Good-breeding is *Surface-Christianity*. Every look, movement, tone, expression, subject of discourse, that may give pain to another is habitually excluded from conversational intercourse. This is the reason why rich people are apt to be so much more agreeable than others.

—I thought you were a great champion of equality, said the discreet and severe lady who had accompanied our young friend, the Latin Tutor's daughter.

I go politically for equality, I said, and socially for *the* quality.

Who are the "quality," said the Model, etc., in a community like ours?

I confess I find this question a little difficult to answer, I said. Nothing is better known than the distinction of social ranks which exists in every community, and nothing is harder to define. The great gentlemen and ladies of a place are its real lords and masters and mistresses; they are the *quality*, whether in a monarchy or a republic; mayors and governors and generals and senators and ex-presidents are nothing to them. How well we know this, and how seldom it finds a distinct expression! Now I tell you truly, I believe in man as man, and I disbelieve in all distinctions except such as follow the natural lines of cleavage in a society which has crystallized according to its own true laws. But the essence of equality is to be able to say the truth; and there is nothing more curious than these truths relating to the stratification of society.

Of all the facts in this world that do not take hold of immortality, there is not one so intensely real, permanent, and engrossing as this of social position,—as you see by the circumstance that the core of all the great social orders the world has seen, has been, and is still, for the most part, a privileged class of gentlemen and ladies arranged in a regular scale of precedence among themselves, but superior as a body to all else.

Nothing but an ideal Christian equality, which we have been getting farther away from since the days of the Primitive Church, can prevent this subdivision of society into classes

from taking place everywhere,—in the great centres of our republic as much as in old European monarchies. Only there position is more absolutely hereditary,—here it is more completely elective.

—Where is the election held? and what are the qualifications? and who are the electors? said the Model.

Nobody ever sees when the vote is taken; there never is a formal vote. The women settle it mostly; and they know wonderfully well what is presentable, and what can't stand the blaze of the chandeliers and the critical eye and ear of people trained to know a staring shade in a ribbon, a false light in a jewel, an ill-bred tone, an angular movement, everything that betrays a coarse fibre and cheap training. As a general thing, you do not get elegance short of two or three removes from the soil, out of which our best blood doubtless comes,—quite as good, no doubt, as if it came from those old prize-fighters with iron pots on their heads, to whom some great people are so fond of tracing their descent through a line of small artisans and petty shopkeepers whose veins have held "base" fluid enough to fill the Cloaca Maxima!

Does not money go everywhere? said the Model.

Almost. And with good reason. For though there are numerous exceptions, rich people are, as I said, commonly altogether the most agreeable companions. The influence of a fine house, graceful furniture, good libraries, well-ordered tables, trim servants, and, above all, a position so secure that one becomes unconscious of it, gives a harmony and refinement to the character and manners which we feel, even if we cannot explain their charm. Yet we can get at the reason of it by thinking a little.

All these appliances are to shield the sensibility from disagreeable contacts, and to soothe it by very natural and artificial influences. In this way the mind, the taste, the feelings, grow delicate, just as the hands grow white and soft when saved from toil and incased in soft gloves. The whole nature becomes subdued into suavity. I confess I like the quality-ladies better than the common kind even of literary ones. They haven't read the last book, perhaps, but they attend better to you when you are talking to them. If they are never learned, they make up for it in tact and elegance. Besides, I think, on the whole, there is less self-assertion in diamonds than in dogmas. I don't know where you will find a sweeter portrait of humility than in Esther, the poor play girl of King Ahasuerus; yet Esther put on her royal apparel when she went before her lord. I have no doubt she was a more gracious and agreeable person than Deborah, who judged the people and wrote the story of Sisera. The wisest woman you talk with is ignorant of something

that you know, but an elegant woman never forgets her elegance.

Dowdyism is clearly an expression of imperfect vitality. The highest fashion is intensely alive,—not alive necessarily to the truest and best things, but with its blood tingling, as it were, in all its extremities and to the farthest point of its surface, so that the feather in its bonnet is as fresh as the crest of a fighting-cock, and the rosette on its slipper as clean-cut and *pim pant* (pronounce it English fashion,—it is a good word) as a dahlia. As a general rule, that society where flattery is acted is much more agreeable than that where it is spoken. Don't you see why? Attention and deference don't require you to make fine speeches expressing your sense of unworthiness (lies) and returning all the compliments paid you. This is one reason.

—A woman of sense ought to be above flattering any man, said the Model.

[*My reflection.* Oh! oh! no wonder you didn't get married. Served you right.] *My remark.* Surely, Madam, if you mean by flattery telling people boldly to their faces that they are this or that, which they are not. But a woman who does not carry a halo of good feeling and desire to make everybody contented about with her wherever she goes,—an atmosphere of grace, mercy, and peace, of at least six feet radius, which raps every human being upon whom she voluntarily bestows her presence, and so flatters him with the comfortable thought that she is rather glad he is alive than otherwise, isn't worth the trouble of talking to, *as a woman*; she may do well enough to hold discussions with.

—I don't think the Model exactly liked this. She said, a little spitefully, I thought,—that a sensible man might stand a little praise, but he would of course soon get sick of it, if he were in the habit of getting much.

Oh yes, I replied, just as men get sick of tobacco. It is notorious how apt they are to get tired of that vegetable.

—That's so! said the young fellow John. I've got tired of my cigars, and burnt 'em all up.

I am heartily glad to hear it, said the Model. I wish they were all disposed of in the same way.

So do I, said the young fellow John.

Can't you get your friends to unite with you in committing those odious instruments of debauchery to the flames in which you have consumed your own?

I wish I could, said the young fellow John.

It would be a noble sacrifice, said the Model,—and every American woman would be grateful to you. Let us burn them all in a heap out in the yard.

'That a'n't my way, said the young fellow John ; I burn 'em one 't' time,—little end in my mouth and big end outside.

——I watched for the effect of this sudden change of programme, when it should reach the calm stillness of the Model's interior apprehension, as a boy watches for the splash of a stone which he has dropped into a well. But before it had fairly reached the water, poor Iris, who had followed the conversation with a certain interest until it turned this sharp corner (for she seems rather to fancy the young fellow John), laughed out such a clear, loud laugh, that it started us all off, as the locust-cry of some full-throated soprano drags a multitudinous chorus after it. It was plain that some dam or other had broken in the soul of this young girl, and she was squaring up old scores of laughter, out of which she had been cheated, with a grand flood of merriment that swept all before it. So we had a great laugh all round, in which the Model—who, if she had as many virtues as there are spokes to a wheel, all compacted with a personality as round and complete as its tire, yet wanted that one little addition of grace, which seems so small, and is as important as the linch-pin in trundling over the rough ways of life—had not the tact to join. She seemed to be "stuffy" about it, as the young fellow John said. In fact, I was afraid the joke would have cost us both our new lady-boarders. It had no effect, however, except, perhaps, to hasten the departure of the elder of the two, who could, on the whole, be spared.

——I had meant to make this note of our conversation a text for a few axioms on the matter of breeding. But it so happened, that, exactly at this point of my record, a very distinguished philosopher, whom several of our boarders and myself go to hear, and whom no doubt many of my readers follow habitually, treated this matter of *manners*. Up to this point, if I have been so fortunate as to coincide with him in opinion, and so unfortunate as to try to express what he has more felicitously said, nobody is to blame ; for what has been given thus far was all written before the lecture was delivered. But what shall I do now ? He told us it was childish to lay down rules for deportment,—but he could not help laying down a few.

Thus,—*Nothing so vulgar as to be in a hurry*.—True, but hard of application. People with short legs step quickly, because legs are pendulums, and swing more times in a minute the shorter they are. Generally a natural rhythm runs through the whole organization : quick pulse, fast breathing, hasty speech, rapid trains of thought, excitable temper. *Stillness* of persons and steadiness of features are signal marks of good-breeding. Vulgar persons can't sit still, or at least, they must work their limbs or features.

*Talking of one's own ails and grievances*.—Bad enough, but



not so bad as insulting the person you talk with by remarking on his ill-looks, or appearing to notice any of his personal peculiarities.

*Apologizing.*—A very desperate habit,—one that is rarely cured. Apology is only egotism wrong side out. Nine times out of ten, the first thing a man's companion knows of his shortcoming is from his apology. It is mighty presumptuous on your part to suppose your small failures of so much consequence that you must make a talk about it.

Good dressing, quiet ways, low tones of voice, lips that can wait, and eyes that do not wander,—shyness of personalities, except in certain intimate communions,—to be *light in hand* in conversation, to have ideas, but to be able to make talk, if necessary, without them,—to belong to the company you are in, and not to yourself,—to have nothing in your dress or furniture so fine that you cannot afford to spoil it and get another like it, yet to preserve the harmonies throughout your person and dwelling: I should say that this was a fair capital of manners to begin with.

Under bad manners, as under graver faults, lies very commonly an overestimate of our special individuality, as distinguished from our generic humanity. It is just here that the very highest society asserts its superior breeding. Among truly elegant people of the highest *ton*, you will find more real equality in social intercourse than in a country village. As nuns drop their birth-names and become Sister Margaret and Sister Mary, so high-bred people drop their personal distinctions and become brothers and sisters of conversational charity. Nor are fashionable people without their heroism. I believe there are men who have shown as much self-devotion in carrying a lone wall-flower down to the supper-table as ever saint or martyr in the act that has canonized his name. There are Florence Nightingales of the ballroom, whom nothing can hold back from their errands of mercy. They find out the red-handed, gloveless undergraduate of bucolic antecedents, as he squirms in his corner, and distil their soft words upon him like dew upon the green herb. They reach even the poor relation, whose dreary apparition saddens the perfumed atmosphere of the sumptuous drawing-room. I have known one of these angels ask, *of her own accord*, that a desolate middle-aged man, whom nobody seemed to know, should be presented to her by the hostess. He wore no shirt collar,—he had on black gloves,—and was flourishing a red bandana handkerchief! Match me this, ye proud children of poverty, who boast of your paltry sacrifices for each other! Virtue in humble life! What is that to the glorious self-renunciation of a martyr in pearls and diamonds? As I saw this noble woman bending gracefully before the social



mendicant,—the white billows of her beauty heaving under the foam of the traitorous laces that half revealed them,—I should have wept with sympathetic emotion, but that tears, except as a private demonstration, are an ill-disguised expression of self-consciousness and vanity, which is inadmissible in good society.

I have sometimes thought, with a pang, of the position in which political chance or contrivance might hereafter place some one of our fellow-citizens. It has happened hitherto, so far as my limited knowledge goes, that the President of the United States has always been what might be called in general terms a gentleman. But what if at some future time the choice of the people should fall upon one on whom that lofty title could not, by any stretch of charity, be bestowed? This may happen,—how soon the future only knows. Think of this miserable man of coming political possibilities,—an unrepresentable boor, sucked into office by one of those eddies in the flow of popular sentiment which carry straws and chips into the public harbour, while the prostrate trunks of the monarchs of the forest hurry down on the senseless stream to the gulf of political oblivion! Think of him, I say, and of the concentrated gaze of good society through its thousand eyes, all confluent, as it were, in one great burning-glass of ice that shrivels its wretched object in fiery torture, itself cold as the glacier of an unsunned cavern! No,—there will be angels of good-breeding then as now, to shield the victim of free institutions from himself and from his torturers. I can fancy a lovely woman playfully withdrawing the knife which he would abuse by making it an instrument for the conveyance of food,—or, failing in this kind artifice, sacrificing herself by imitating his use of that implement; how much harder than to plunge it into her bosom, like Lucretia! I can see her studying his provincial dialect until she becomes the Champollion of New England or Western or Southern barbarisms. She has learned that *häow* means *what*; that *thinkin'* is the same thing as *thinking*; or she has found out the meaning of that extraordinary monosyllable, which no single-tongued phonographer can make legible, prevailing on the banks of the Hudson and at its embouchure, and elsewhere,—what they say when they think they say *first* (*fe-eest*,—*fe* as in the French *le*),—or that *cheer* means *chair*,—or that *urritation* means *irritation*,—and so of other enormities. Nothing surprises her. The highest breeding, you know, comes round to the Indian standard, to take everything coolly—*nil admirari*,—if you happen to be learned and like the Roman phrase for the same thing.

If you like the company of people that stare at you from head to foot to see if there is a hole in your coat, or if you have not grown a little older, or if your eyes are not yellow with jaundice,

or if your complexion is not a little faded, and so on, and then convey the fact to you, in the style in which the Poor Relation addressed the Divinity-Student,—go with them as much as you like. I hate the sight of the wretches. Don't for mercy's sake think I hate *them*; the distinction is one my friend or I drew long ago. No matter where you find such people; they are clowns. The rich woman who looks and talks in this way is not half so much a lady as her Irish servant, whose pretty "saving your presence," when she has to say something which offends her natural sense of good manners, has a hint in it of the breeding of courts, and the blood of old Milesian kings, which very likely runs in her veins,—thinned by two hundred years of potato, which, being an underground fruit, tends to drag down the generations that are made of it to the earth from which it came, and, filling their veins with starch, turn them into a kind of human vegetable.

I say, if you like such people go with them. But I am going to make a practical application of the example at the beginning of this particular record, which some young people who are going to choose professional advisers by-and-by may remember and thank me for. If you are making choice of a physician, be sure you get one, if possible, with a cheerful and serene countenance. A physician is not—at least ought not to be—an executioner; and a sentence of death on his face is as bad as a warrant for execution signed by the Governor. As a general rule, no man has a right to tell another by word or look that he is going to die. It may be necessary in some extreme cases; but as a rule, it is the last extreme of impertinence which one human being can offer to another. "You have killed me," said a patient once to a physician who had rashly told him he was incurable. He ought to have lived six months, but he was dead in six weeks. If we will only let Nature and the God of Nature alone, persons will commonly learn their condition as early as they ought to know it, and not be cheated out of their natural birthright of hope of recovery, which is intended to accompany sick people as long as life is comfortable, and is graciously replaced by the hope of heaven, or at least of rest, when life has become a burden which the bearer is ready to let fall.

Underbred people tease their sick and dying friends to death. The chance of a gentleman or lady with a given mortal ailment to live a certain time is as good again as that of the common sort of coarse people. As you go down the social scale, you reach a point at length where the common talk in sick rooms is of churchyards and sepulchres, and a kind of perpetual vivisection is for ever carried on, upon the person of the miserable sufferer.

And so, in choosing your clergyman, other things being

equal, prefer one of a wholesome and cheerful habit of mind and body. If you can get along with people who carry a certificate in their faces that their goodness is so great as to make them very miserable, your children cannot. And whatever offends one of these little ones, cannot be right in the eyes of Him Who loved them so well.

After all, as *you* are a gentleman or a lady, you will probably select gentlemen for your bodily and spiritual advisers, and then all will be right.

This repetition of the above words—*gentleman* and *lady*—which could not be conveniently avoided, reminds me what strange uses are made of them by those who ought to know what they mean. Thus, at a marriage ceremony, once, of two very excellent persons who had been at service, instead of, Do you take this man, &c? and, Do you take this woman? how do you think the officiating clergyman put the questions? It was, Do you, MISS So and So, take this GENTLEMAN? and, Do you, MR. This or That, take this LADY?! What would any English duchess, ay, or the Queen of England herself, have thought, if the Archbishop of Canterbury had called her and her bridegroom anything but plain woman and man at such a time?

I don't doubt the Poor Relation thought it was all very fine, if she happened to be in the church; but if the worthy man who uttered these monstrous words—monstrous in such a connection—had known the ludicrous surprise, the convulsion of inward disgust and contempt, that seized upon many of the persons who were present,—had guessed what a sudden flash of light it threw on the dutch-gilding, the pinchbeck, the shabby, perking pretension belonging to certain social layers,—so inherent in their whole mode of being, that the holiest offices of religion cannot exclude its impertinences,—the good man would have given his marriage-fee twice over to recall that superb and full-blown vulgarism. Any persons whom it could please could have no better notion of what the words referred to signify than of the meaning of *apsides* and *asymptotes*.

MAN! sir! WOMAN! sir! Gentility is a fine thing, not to be undervalued, as I have been trying to explain; but humanity comes before that.

“When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?”

The beauty of that plainness of speech and manners which comes from the finest training is not to be understood by those whose *habitat* is below a certain level. Just as the exquisite sea-anemones and all the graceful ocean flowers die out at some fathoms below the surface, the elegances and suavities of life die out one by one as we sink through the social scale.

Fortunately, the virtues are more tenacious of life, and last pretty well until we get down to the mud of absolute pauperism, where they do not flourish greatly.

—I had almost forgotten about our boarders. As the Model of all the Virtues is about to leave us, I find myself wondering what is the reason we are not all very sorry. Surely we all like good persons. She is a good person. Therefore we like her.—Only we don't.

This brief syllogism, and its briefer negative involving the principle which some English conveyancer borrowed from a French wit and embodied in the lines by which *Dr. Fell* is made unamiably immortal,—this syllogism, I say, is one that most persons have had occasion to construct and demolish respecting somebody or other, as I have done for the Model. "Pious and painefull." Why has that excellent old phrase gone out of use? Simply because these good *painefull* or painstaking persons proved to be such nuisances in the long run, that the word "painefull" came, before people thought of it, to mean *paingiving* instead of *painstaking*.

—So, the old fellah's off to-morrah, said the young man John.

Old fellow? said I, whom do you mean?

Why, the one that came with our little beauty,—the old fellah in petticoats.

—Now that means something, said I to myself.—These rough young rascals very often hit the nail on the head, if they do strike with their eyes shut. A real woman does a great many things without knowing why she does them; but these pattern machines mix up their intellects with everything they do, just like men. They can't help it, no doubt, but we can't help getting sick of them, either. Intellect is to a woman's nature what her watch-spring skirt is to her dress; it ought to underlie her silks and embroideries, but not to show itself too staringly on the outside. You don't know, perhaps, but I will tell you;—the brain is the palest of all the internal organs, and the heart the reddest. Whatever comes from the brain carries the hue of the place it came from, and whatever comes from the heart carries the heat and colour of its birthplace.

The young man John did not hear my *soliloque*, of course, but sent up one more bubble from our sinking conversation, in the form of a statement, that she was at liberty to go to a personage who receives no visits, as is commonly supposed, from virtuous people.

Why, I ask again (of my reader), should a person who never did anybody any wrong, but, on the contrary, is an estimable and intelligent, nay, a particularly enlightened and exemplary member of society, fail to inspire interest, love and devotion?

Because of the *reversed current* in the flow of thought and emotion. The red heart sends all its instincts up to the white brain to be analyzed, chilled, blanched, and so become pure reason, which is just exactly what we do not want of woman as woman. The current should run the other way. The nice, calm, cold thought, which in women shapes itself so rapidly that they hardly know it as thought, should always travel to the lips *via* the heart. It does so in those women whom all love and admire. It travels the wrong way in the Model. That is the reason why the Little Gentleman said, "I hate her, I hate her." That is the reason why the young man John called her the "old fellah," and banished her to the company of the great Unpresentable. That is the reason why I, the Professor, am picking her to pieces with scalpel and forceps. That is the reason why the young girl whom she has befriended repays her kindness with gratitude and respect, rather than with the devotion and passionate fondness which lie sleeping beneath the calmness of her amber eyes. I can see her, as she sits between this estimable and most correct of personages and the misshapen, crotchety, often violent and explosive little man on the other side of her, leaning and swaying towards him as she speaks, and looking into his sad eyes as if she found some fountain in them at which her soul could quiet its thirst.

Women like the Model are a natural product of a chilly climate and high culture. It is not

"The frolic wind that breathes the spring,  
Zephyr with Aurora playing,"

when the two meet

———"on beds of violets blue,  
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,"

that claim such women as their offspring. It is rather the east wind, as it blows out of the fogs of Newfoundland, and clasps a clear-eyed wintry noon on the chill bridal couch of a New England ice-quarry.—Don't throw up your cap now, and hurrah as if this were giving up everything, and turning against the best growth of our latitudes,—the daughters of the soil. The brain-women never interest us like the heart-women; white roses please less than red. But our Northern seasons have a narrow green streak of spring, as well as a broad white zone of winter,—they have a glowing band of summer and a golden stripe of autumn in their many-coloured wardrobe; and women are born to us that wear all these hues of earth and heaven in their souls. Our ice-eyed brain-women are really admirable, if we only ask of them just what they can give, and no more. Only compare them, talking or writing, with one of those babbling,

chattering dolls, of warmer latitudes, who do not know enough even to keep out of print, and who are interesting to us only as specimens of *arrest of development* for our psychological cabinets.

Good-bye, Model of all the Virtues! We can spare you now. A little clear perfection, undiluted with human weakness, goes a great way. Go! be useful, be honourable and honoured, be just, be charitable, talk pure reason, and help to disenchant the world by the light of an achromatic understanding. Good-bye! Where is my Béranger? I must read a verse or two of "Frétilon."

Fair play for all. But don't claim incompatible qualities for anybody. Justice is a very rare virtue of our community. Everything that public sentiment cares about is put into a Papin's digester, and boiled under high pressure till all is turned into one homogeneous pulp, and the very bones give up their jelly. What are all the strongest epithets of our dictionary to us now? The critics and the politicians, and especially the philanthropists, have chewed them, till they are mere wads of syllable-fibre, without a suggestion of their old pungency and power.

Justice! A good man respects the rights even of brute matter and arbitrary symbols. If he writes the same words twice in succession, by accident, he always erases the one that stands *second*; has not the first-comer the prior right? This act of abstract justice, which I trust many of my readers, like myself, have often performed, is a curious anti-illustration, by the way, of the absolute wickedness of human dispositions. Why doesn't a man always strike out the *first* of the two words, to gratify his diabolical love of *injustice*?

So, I say, we owe a genuine, substantial tribute of respect to these filtered intellects which have left their womanhood on the strainer. They are so clear that it is a pleasure at times to look at the world of thought through them. But the rose and purple tints of richer natures they cannot give us, and it is not just to them to ask it.

Fashionable society gets at these rich natures very often in a way one would hardly at first think of. It loves vitality above all things, sometimes disguised by affected languor, always well kept under by the laws of good-breeding,—but still it loves abundant life, opulent and showy organizations,—the spherical rather than the plane trigonometry of female architecture,—plenty of red blood, flashing eyes, tropical voices, and forms that bear the splendours of dress without growing pale beneath their lustre. Among these you will find the most delicious women you will ever meet, women whom dress and flattery and the round of city gaieties cannot spoil,—talking with whom

you forget their diamonds and laces,—and around whom all the nice details of elegance, which the cold-blooded beauty next them is scanning so nicely, blend in one harmonious whole, too perfect to be disturbed by the petulant sparkle of a jewel, or the yellow glare of a bangle or the gay toss of a feather.

There are many things that I, personally, love better than fashion or wealth. Not to speak of those highest objects of our love and loyalty, I think I love ease and independence better than the golden slavery of perpetual *matinées* and *soirées*, or the pleasures of accumulation.

But fashion and wealth are two very solemn realities, which the frivolous class of moralists have talked a great deal of silly stuff about. Fashion is only the attempt to realize Art in living forms and social intercourse. What business has a man who knows nothing about the beautiful, and cannot pronounce the word *view*, to talk about fashion to a set of people who, if one of the quality left a card at their doors, would contrive to keep it on the very top of their heap of the names of their two-story acquaintances, till it was as yellow as the Codex Vaticanus?

Wealth, too,—what an endless repetition of the same foolish trivialities about it! Take the single fact of its alleged uncertain tenure and transitory character. In old times, when men were all the time fighting and robbing each other,—in those tropical countries where the Sabeans and the Chaldeans stole all a man's cattle and camels, and there were frightful tornadoes and rains of fire from heaven, it was true enough that riches took wings to themselves, not unfrequently, in a very unexpected way. But, with common prudence in investments, it is not so now. In fact, there is nothing earthly that lasts so well, on the whole, as money. A man's learning dies with him; even his virtues fade out of remembrance; but the dividends on the stocks he bequeathes to his children live and keep his memory green.

I do not think there is much courage or originality in giving utterance to truths that everybody knows, but which get overlaid by conventional trumpery. The only distinction which it is necessary to point out to feeble-minded folk is this: that, in asserting the breadth and depth of that significance which gives to fashion and fortune their tremendous power, we do not indorse the extravagancies which often disgrace the one, nor the meanness which often degrades the other.

A remark which seems to contradict a universally current opinion is not generally to be taken "neat," but watered with the ideas of common sense and commonplace people. So, if any of my young friends should be tempted to waste their substance on white kids and "all-rounds," or to insist on becoming millionnaires at once, by anything I have said, I will give them references to some of the class referred to, well known to the



public as providers of literary diluents, who will weaken any truth so that there is not an old woman in the land who cannot take it with perfect impunity.

I am afraid some of the blessed saints in diamonds will think I mean to flatter them. I hope not ;—if I do, set it down as a weakness. But there is so much foolish talk about wealth and fashion (which, of course, draw a good many heartless and essentially vulgar people into the glare of their candelabra, but which have a real respectability and meaning, if we will only look at them stereoscopically, with both eyes instead of one), that I thought it a duty to speak a few words for them. Why can't somebody give us a list of things that everybody thinks and nobody says, and another list of things that everybody says and nobody thinks ?

Lest my parish should suppose we have forgotten graver matters in these lesser topics, I beg them to drop these trifles and read the following lesson for the day.

#### THE TWO STREAMS.

Behold the rocky wall  
That down its sloping sides  
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as they fall,  
In rushing river-tides !

Yon stream, whose sources run  
Turned by a pebble's edge,  
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun  
Through the cleft mountain-ledge.

The slender rill had strayed,  
But for the slanting stone,  
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid  
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will  
Life's parting stream descends,  
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,  
Each widening torrent bends,—

From the same cradle's side,  
From the same mother's knee,—  
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,  
One to the Peaceful Sea !

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#### VII.

**O**UR landlady's daughter is a young lady of some pretensions to gentility. She wears her bonnet well back on her head, which is known by all to be a mark of high breeding. She



wears her trains very long, as the great ladies do in Europe. To be sure, their dresses are so made only to sweep the tapestried floors of châteaux and palaces ; as those odious aristocrats of the other side do not go dragging through the mud in silks and satins, but, forsooth, must ride in coaches when they are in full dress. It is true, that, considering various habits of the American people, also the little accidents which the best-kept sidewalks are liable to, a lady who has swept a mile of them is not exactly in such a condition that one would care to be her neighbour. But then there is no need of being so hard on these slight weaknesses of the poor dear women, as our little Deformed Gentleman was the other day.

— There are no such women as the Boston women, sir, he said. Forty-two degrees, north latitude, Rome, sir, Boston, sir ! They had grand women in old Rome, sir,—and the women bore such men-children as never the world saw before. And so it was here, sir. I tell you, the revolution the Boston boys started had to run in woman's milk before it ran in man's blood, sir !

But confound the make-believe women we have turned loose into our streets !—where do *they* come from ? Not out of Boston parlours, I trust. Why, there isn't a beast or a bird that would drag its tail through the dirt in the way these creatures do their dresses. Because a queen or a duchess wears long robes on great occasions, a maid-of-all-work or a factory-girl thinks she must make herself a nuisance by trailing through the street, picking up and carrying about with her—pah ! that's what I call getting vulgarity into your bones and marrow. Making believe be what you are not is the essence of vulgarity. Show over dirt is the one attribute of vulgar people. If any man can walk behind one of these women and see what she rakes up as she goes, and not feel squeamish, he has got a tough stomach. I wouldn't let one of 'em into my room without serving 'em as David served Saul at the cave in the wilderness,—cut off his skirts, sir ! cut off his skirts !

I suggested, that I had seen some pretty stylish ladies who offended in the way he condemned.

Stylish *women*, I don't doubt, said the Little Gentleman,—dost tell me that a true lady ever sacrifices the duty of keeping all about her sweet and clean to the wish of making a vulgar show. I won't believe it of a lady, there are some things that no fashion has any right to touch, and cleanliness is one of those things. If a woman wishes to show that her husband or her father has got money, which she wants and means to spend, but doesn't know how, let her buy a yard or two of silk and pin it to her dress when she goes out to walk, but let her unpin it before she goes into the house ;—there may be poor women that will

think it worth disinfecting. It is an insult to a respectable laundress to carry such things into a house for her to deal with. I don't like the Bloomers any too well,—in fact, I never saw but one, and she—or he, or it—had a mob of boys after her, or whatever you call the creature, as if she had been a——

The Little Gentleman stopped short,—flushed somewhat, and looked round with that involuntary, suspicious glance which the subjects of any bodily misfortune are very apt to cast round them. His eye wandered over the company, none of whom, excepting myself and one other, had, probably, noticed the movement. They fell at last on Iris,—his next neighbour, you remember.

——We know in a moment, on looking suddenly at a person, if that person's eyes have been fixed on us. Sometimes we are conscious of it *before* we turn so as to see the person. Strange secrets of curiosity, of impertinence, of malice, of love, leak out in this way. There is no need of Mrs. Felix Lorraine's reflection in the mirror, to tell us that she is plotting evil for us behind our backs. We know it, as we know by the ominous stillness of a child that some mischief or other is going on. A young girl betrays, in a moment, that her eyes have been feeding on the face where you find them fixed, and not merely brushing over it with their pencils of blue or brown light.

A certain involuntary adjustment assimilates us, you may also observe, to that upon which we look. Roses redden the cheeks of her who stoops to gather them, and buttercups turn little people's chins yellow. When we look at a vast landscape, our chests expand as if we would enlarge to fill it. When we examine a minute object, we naturally contract, not only our foreheads, but all our dimensions. If I *see* two men wrestling, I wrestle too, with my limbs and features. When a country-fellow comes upon the stage, you will see twenty faces in the boxes putting on the bumpkin expression. There is no need of multiplying instances to reach this generalization; every person and thing we look upon puts its special mark upon us. If this is repeated often enough, we get a permanent resemblance to it, or at least a fixed aspect which we took from it. Husband and wife come to look alike at last, as has often been noticed. It is a common saying of a jockey that he is "all horse"; and I have often fancied that milkmen get a stiff, upright carriage, and an angular movement of the arm, that reminds one of a pump and the working of its handle.

All this came in by accident, just because I happened to mention that the Little Gentleman found that Iris had been looking at him with her soul in her eyes, when his glance rested on her after wandering round the company. What he thought, it is hard to say; but the shadow of suspicion faded off from his face,

and he looked calmly into the amber eyes, resting his cheek upon the hand that wore the red jewel.

—If it were a possible thing,—women are such strange creatures! Is there any trick that love and their own fancies do not play them? Just see how they marry! A woman that gets hold of a bit of manhood is like one of those Chinese wood-carvers who work on any odd, fantastic root that comes to hand, and, if it is only bulbous above and bifurcated below, will always contrive to make a man—such as he is—out of it. I should like to see any kind of a man, distinguishable from a gorilla, that some good and even pretty woman could not shape a husband out of.

—A child,—yes, if you choose to call her so,—but such a child! Do you know how Art brings all ages together? There is no age to the angels and ideal human forms among which the artist lives, and he shares their youth until his hand trembles and his eye grows dim. The youthful painter talks of white-bearded Leonardo as if he were a brother, and the veteran forgets that Raphael died at an age to which his own is of patriarchal antiquity.

But why this lover of the beautiful should be so drawn to one whom Nature has wronged so deeply seems hard to explain. Pity, I suppose. They say that leads to love.

—I thought this matter over until I became excited and curious, and determined to set myself more seriously at work to find out what was going on in these wild hearts, and where their passionate lives were drifting. I say wild hearts and passionate lives, because I think I can look through this seeming calmness of youth and this apparent feebleness of organization, and see that Nature, whom it is very hard to cheat, is only waiting as the sapper waits in his mind, knowing that all is in readiness and the slow-match burning quietly down to the powder. He will leave it by-and-by, and then it will take care of itself.

One need not wait to see the smoke coming through the roof of a house and the flames breaking out of the window to know that the building is on fire. Hark! There is a quiet, steady, unobtrusive, crisp, not loud, but very knowing, little creeping crackle that is tolerably intelligible. There is a whiff of something floating about, suggestive of toasting shingles. Also a sharp pyroligneous-acid pungency in the air that stings one's eyes. Let us get up and see what is going on.—Oh,—oh,—oh! do you know what has got hold of you? It is the great red dragon that is born of the little red eggs we call *sparks*, with his hundred blowing red manes, and his thousand lashing red tails, and his multitudinous red eyes glaring at every crack and key-hole, and his countless red tongues lapping the beams he is going to crunch presently, and his hot breath warping the

panels and cracking the glass and making old timber sweat that had forgotten it was ever alive with sap. Run for your life! leap! or you will be a cinder in five minutes, that nothing but a coroner would take for the wreck of a human being!

If any gentleman will have the kindness to stop this run-away comparison, I shall be much obliged to him. All I intended to say was, that we need not wait for hearts to break out in flames to know that they are full of combustibles and that a spark has got among them. I don't pretend to say or know what it is that brings these two persons together;—and when I say together, I only mean that there is an evident affinity of some kind or other which makes their commonest intercourse strangely significant, as that each seems to understand a look or a word of the other. When the young girl laid her hand on the Little Gentleman's arm,—which so greatly shocked the Model, you may remember,—I saw that she had learned the lion-tamer's secret. She masters him, and yet I can see she has a kind of awe of him, as the man who goes into the cage has of the monster that he makes a baby of.

One of two things must happen. The first is love, downright love, on the part of this young girl, for the poor little misshapen man. You may laugh if you like. But women are apt to love the men who they think have the largest capacity of loving;—and who can love like one that has thirsted all his life long for the smile of youth and beauty, and seen it fly his presence as the wave ebbed from the parched lips of him whose fabled punishment is the perpetual type of human longing and disappointment? What would become of *him*, if this fresh soul should stoop upon him in her first young passion, as the flamingo drops out of the sky upon some lonely and dark lagoon in the marshes of Cagliari, with a flutter of scarlet feathers and a kindling of strange fires in the shadowy waters that hold her burning image?

—Marry her, of course?—Why, no, not *of course*. I should think the chance less, on the whole, that he would be willing to marry her than she to marry him.

There is one other thing that might happen. If the interest he awakes in her gets to be a deep one, and yet has nothing of love in it, she will glance off from him into some great passion or other. All excitements run to love in women of a certain—let us not say age, but youth. An electrical current passing through a coil of wire makes a magnet of a bar of iron lying within it, but not touching it. So a woman is turned into a love-magnet by a tingling current of life running round her. I should like to see one of them balanced on a pivot properly adjusted, and watch if she did not turn so as to point north and south,—as she would, if the love-currents are like those of the earth our mother.

Pray, do you happen to remember Wordsworth's "Boy of Windermere?" This boy used to put his hands to his mouth and shout aloud, mimicking the hooting of the owls, who would answer him

"with quivering peals,  
And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud  
Redoubled and redoubled."

When they failed to answer him, and he hung listening intently for their voices, he would sometimes catch the faint sound of far distant waterfalls, or the whole scene around him would imprint itself with new force upon his perceptions.—Read the sonnet, if you please;—it is Wordsworth all over,—trivial in subject, solemn in style, vivid in description, prolix in detail, true metaphysically, but immensely suggestive of "imagination," to use a mild term, when related as an actual fact of a sprightly youngster.

All I want of it is to enforce the principle, that, when the door of the soul is once opened to a guest, there is no knowing who will come in next.

—Our young girl keeps up her early habit of sketching heads and characters. Nobody is, I should think, more faithful and exact in the drawing of the academical figures given her as lessons; but there is a perpetual arabesque of fancies that runs round the margin of her drawings, and there is one book which I know she keeps to run riot in, where, if anywhere, a shrewd eye would be most likely to read her thoughts. This book of hers I mean to see, if I can get at it honourably.

I have never yet crossed the threshold of the Little Gentleman's chamber. How he lives, when he once gets within it, I can only guess. His hours are late, as I have said; often, on waking late in the night, I see the light through cracks in his window-shutters on the wall of the house opposite. If the times of witchcraft were not over, I should be afraid to be so close a neighbour to a place from which there come such strange noises. Sometimes it is the dragging of something heavy over the floor, that makes me shiver to hear it,—it sounds so like what people that kill other people have to do now and then. Occasionally I hear very sweet strains of music,—whether of a wind or stringed instrument, or a human voice, strange as it may seem, I have often tried to find out, but through the partition I could not be quite sure. If I have not heard a woman cry and moan, and then again laugh as though she would die laughing, I have heard sounds so like them that—I am a fool to confess it—I have covered my head with the bed-clothes; for I have had a fancy in my dreams, that I could hardly shake off when I woke up, about that so-called witch that was his great grandmother, or whatever it was,—a sort of fancy that she visited the

Little Gentleman,—a young woman in old-fashioned dress, with a red ring round her white neck,—not a necklace, but a dull stain.

Of course you don't suppose that I have any foolish superstitions about the matter,—I, the Professor, who have seen enough to take all that nonsense out of any man's head ! It is not our beliefs that frighten us half so much as our fancies. A man not only believes, but knows he runs a risk, whenever he steps into a railroad car ; but it doesn't worry him much. On the other hand, carry that man across a pasture a little way from some dreary country-village, and show him an old house where there were strange deaths a good many years ago, and there are rumours of ugly spots on the walls,—the old man hung himself in the garret, that is certain, and ever since the country-people have called it "the haunted house,"—the owners haven't been able to let it since the last tenants left on account of the noises,—so it has fallen into sad decay, and the moss grows on the rotten shingles of the roof, and the clapboards have turned black, and the windows rattle like teeth that chatter with fear, and the walls of the house begin to lean as if its knees were shaking,—take the man who didn't mind the real risk of the cars to that old house, on some dreary November evening, and ask him to sleep there alone,—how do you think he will like it ? He doesn't believe one word of ghosts,—but then he knows, that, whether waking or sleeping, his imagination will people the haunted chambers with ghostly images. It is not what we *believe*, as I said before, that frightens us commonly, but what we *conceive*. A principle that reaches a good way, if I am not mistaken. I say, then, that, if these odd sounds coming from the Little Gentleman's chamber sometimes make me nervous, so that I cannot get to sleep, it is not because I suppose he is engaged in any unlawful or mysterious way. The only wicked suggestion that ever came into my head was one that was founded on the landlady's story of his having a pile of gold ; it was a ridiculous fancy ; besides, I suspect the story of *sweating* gold was only one of the many fables got up to make the Jews odious and afford a pretext for plundering them. As for the sound like a woman laughing and crying, I never said it *was* a woman's voice ; for, in the first place, I could only hear indistinctly ; and, secondly, he may have an organ, or some queer instrument or other, with what they call the *vox humana* stop. If he moves his bed round to get away from the window, or for any such reason, there is nothing very frightful in that simple operation. Most of our foolish conceits explain themselves in some such simple way. And yet, for all that, I confess, that, when I woke up the other evening, and heard, first a sweet complaining cry, and then footsteps, and then the dragging sound,—nothing but his bed,

I am quite sure,—I felt a stirring in the roots of my hair as the feasters did in Keats's terrible poem of "*Lamia*."

There is nothing very odd in my feeling nervous when I happen to lie awake and get listening for sounds. Just keep your ear open any time after midnight, when you are lying in bed in a lone attic of a dark night. What horrid, strange, suggestive unaccountable noises you will hear! The *stillness* of night is a vulgar error. All the dead things seem to be alive. Crack! That is the old chest of drawers; you never hear it crack in the daytime. Creak! There's a door ajar; *you know you shut them all*. Where can that latch be that rattles so? Is anybody trying it softly? or, worse than any *body*, is——? (Cold shiver.) Then a sudden gust that jars all the windows;—very strange!—there does not seem to be any wind about that it belongs to. When it stops, you hear the worms boring in the powdery beams overhead. Then steps outside,—a stray animal, no doubt. All right,—but a gentle moisture breaks out all over you; and then something like a whistle or a cry,—another gust of wind, perhaps; that accounts for the rustling that just made your heart roll over and tumble about, so that it felt more like a live rat under your ribs than a part of your own body; then a crash of something that has fallen,—blown over, very likely—*Pater noster, qui es in cælis!* for you are damp and cold, and sitting bolt upright, and the bed trembling so that the death-watch is frightened and has stopped ticking!

No,—night is an awful time for strange noises and secret doings. Who ever dreamed, till one of our sleepless neighbours told us of it, of that Walpurgis gathering of birds and beasts of prey,—foxes, and owls, and crows, and eagles, that come from all the country round on moonshiny nights to crunch the clams and mussels, and pick out the eyes of dead fishes that the storm has thrown on Chelsea Beach? Our old mother Nature has pleasant and cheery tones enough for us when she comes in her dress of blue and gold over the eastern hill-tops; but when she follows us up-stairs to our beds in her suit of black velvet and diamonds, every creak of her sandals and every whisper of her lips is full of mystery and fear.

You understand, then, distinctly, that I do not believe there is anything about this singular little neighbour of mine which is as it should not be. Probably a visit to his room would clear up all that has puzzled me, and make me laugh at the notions which began, I suppose, in nightmares, and ended by keeping my imagination at work so as almost to make me uncomfortable at times. But it is not so easy to visit him as some of our other boarders, for various reasons which I will not stop to mention. I think some of them are rather pleased to get "*the Professor*" *under their ceilings*.



The young man John, for instance, asked me to come up one day and try some "old Burbon," which he said was A 1. On asking him what was the number of his room, he answered, that it was forty-seven, sky-parlour floor, but that I shouldn't find it, if he didn't go ahead to show me the way. I followed him to his *habitat*, being very willing to see in what kind of warren he burrowed, and thinking I might pick up something about the boarders who had excited my curiosity.

Mighty close quarters they were where the young man John bestowed himself and his furniture; this last consisting of a bed, a chair, a bureau, a trunk, and numerous pegs with coats and "pants" and "vests,"—as he was in the habit of calling waistcoats and pantaloons or trousers,—hanging up as if the owner had melted out of them. Several prints were pinned up unframed,—among them that grand national portrait-piece, "Barnum presenting Ossian E. Dodge to Jenny Lind," and a picture of a famous trot, in which I admired anew the cabalistic air of that imposing array of expressions, and especially the Italicized word, "Dan Mace *names* b. h. Major Slocum," and "Hiram Woodruff *names* g. m. Lady Smith." "Best three in five. Time: 2.40, 2.46, 2.50."

That set me thinking how very odd this matter of trotting horses is, as an index of the mathematical exactness of the laws of living mechanism. I saw Lady Suffolk trot a mile in 2.26. Flora Temple has trotted close down to 2.20; and Ethan Allen in 2.25, or less. Many horses have trotted their mile under 2.30; none that I remember in public as low down as 2.20. From five to ten *seconds*, then, in about a hundred and sixty is the whole range of the maxima of the present race of trotting-horses. The same thing is seen in the running of men. Many can run a mile in five minutes; but when one comes to the fractions below, they taper down until somewhere about 4.30 the maximum is reached. Averages of masses have been studied more than averages of maxima and minima. We know from the Registrar-General's Reports, that a certain number of children—say from one to two dozen—die every year in England from drinking hot water out of spouts of tea-kettles. We know, that, among suicides, women and men past a certain age almost never use fire-arms. A woman who has made up her mind to die is still afraid of a pistol or a gun. Or is it that the explosion would derange her costume? I say, averages of masses we have; but our tables of maxima we owe to the sporting men more than to the philosophers. The lesson their experience teaches is, that Nature makes no leaps,—does nothing *per saltum*. The greatest brain that ever lived, no doubt, was only a small fraction of an idea ahead of the second best. Just look at the chess-players. Leaving out the phenomenal exceptions,



the nice shades that separate the skilful ones show how closely their brains approximate,—almost as closely as chronometers. Such a person is a “*knight-player*,”—he must have that piece given him. Another must have two pawns. . Another, “pawn and two,” or one pawn and two moves. . Then we find one who claims “pawn and move,” holding himself, with this fractional advantage, a match for one who would be pretty sure to beat him playing even.—So much are minds alike ; and you and I think we are “peculiar,”—that nature broke her jelly-mould after shaping our cerebral convolutions !—So I reflected, standing and looking at the picture.

—I say, Governor, broke in the young man John,—them hosses ’ll stay jest as well, if you’ll only set down. I’ve had ’em this year, and they haven’t stirred.—He spoke, and handed the chair towards me,—seating himself at the same time, on the end of the bed.

You have lived in this house some time ? I said,—with a note of interrogation at the end of the statement.

Do I look as if I’d lost much flesh ? said he, answering my question by another.

No, said I ; for that matter, I think you do credit to “the bountifully furnished table of the excellent lady who provides so liberally for the company that meets around her hospitable board.”

[The sentence in quotation-marks was from one of those disinterested editorials in small type, which I suspect to have been furnished by a friend of the landlady’s, and paid for as an advertisement. This impartial testimony to the superior qualities of the establishment and its head attracted a number of applicants for admission, and a couple of new boarders made a brief appearance at the table. One of them was of the class of people who grumble if they don’t get canvas-backs and woodcocks every day, for three-fifty per week. The other was subject to somnambulism, or walking in the night, when he ought to have been asleep in his bed. In this state he walked into several of the boarders’ chambers, his eyes wide open, as is usual with somnambulists, and, from some odd instinct or other, wishing to know what the hour was, got together a number of their watches, for the purpose of comparing them, as it would seem. Among them was a repeater, belonging to our young Marylander. He happened to wake up while the somnambulist was in his chamber, and not knowing his infirmity, caught hold of him and gave him a dreadful shaking, after which he tied his hands and feet, and so left him till morning, when he introduced him to a gentleman used to taking care of such cases of somnambulism.]

If you, my reader, will please to skip backward, over this

parenthesis, you will come to our conversation which it has interrupted.

It a'n't the feed, said the young man John,—it's the old woman's looks when a fellah lays it in too strong. The feed's well enough. After geese have got tough, 'n' turkeys have got strong, 'n' lamb's got old, 'n' veal's pretty nigh beef, 'n' spar-ragrass's growin' tall 'n' slim 'n' scattery about the head, 'n' green peas are gettin' so big 'n' hard they'd be dangerous if you fired 'em out of a revolver, we get hold of all them delicacies of the season. But it's too much like feedin' on live folks and devourin' widdah's substance, to lay yourself out in the eatin' way, when a fellah's as hungry as the chap that said a turkey was too much for one 'n' not enough for two. I can't help lookin' at the old woman. Corned-beef-days she's tolerable calm. Roastin'-days she worries some, 'n' keeps a sharp eye on the chap that carves. But when there's anything in the poultry line, it seems to hurt her feelin's so to see the knife goin' into the breast and joints comin' to pieces, and there's no comfort in eatin'. When I cut up an old fowl and help the boarders, I always feel as if I ought to say, Won't you have a slice of widdah?—instead of chicken.

The young man John fell into a train of reflections which ended in his producing a Bologna sausage, a plate of "crackers," as we Boston folks call certain biscuits, and the bottle of whiskey described as being A 1.

Under the influence of the crackers and sausage, he grew cordial and communicative.

It was time, I thought, to sound him as to those of our boarders who had excited my curiosity.

What do you thing of our young Iris? I began.

Fust-rate little filly, he said. Pootiest and nicest little chap I've seen since the schoolma'am left. Schoolma'am was a brown-haired one,—eyes coffee-colour. This one has got wine-coloured eyes,—'n' that's the reason they turn a fellah's head, I suppose.

This is a splendid blonde, I said,—the other was a brunette. Which style do you like best?

Which do I like best, boiled mutton or roast mutton? said the young man John. Like 'em both,—it a'n't the colour of 'em makes the goodness. I've been kind of lonely since schoolma'am went away. Used to like to look at her. I never said anything particular to her, that I remember, but——

I don't know whether it was the cracker and sausage, or that the young fellow's feet were treading on the hot ashes of some longing that had not had time to cool, but his eye glistened as he stopped.

I suppose she wouldn't have looked at a fellah like me, he

said,—but I come pretty near tryin'. If she had said, Yes, though, I shouldn't have known what to have done with her. Can't marry a woman now-a-days till you're so deaf you have to cock your head like a parrot to hear what she says, and so long-sighted you can't see what she looks like nearer than arm's-length.

Here is another chance for you, I said. What do you want nicer than such a young lady as Iris?

It's no use, he answered. I look at them girls and feel as the fellah did when he missed catchin' the trout. To'od 'a' cost more butter to cook him 'n' he's worth, said the fellah. Takes a whole piece o' goods to cover a girl up now-a-days. I'd as lief undertake to keep a span of elephants—and take an ostrich to board, too,—as to marry one of 'em. What's the use? Clerks and counter-jumpers a'n't anything. Sparragrass and green peas a'n't for them,—not while they're young and tender. Hossback-ridin' a'n't for them,—except once a year,—on Fast-day. And marryin' a'n't for them. Sometimes a fellah feels lonely, and would like to have a nice young woman, to tell her how lonely he feels. And sometimes a fellah,—here the young man John looked very confidential, and, perhaps, as if a little ashamed of his weakness,—sometimes a fellah would like to have one o' them small young ones to trot on his knee and push about in a little wagon,—a kind of a little Johnny, you know :—it's odd enough, but, it seems to me, nobody can afford them little articles, except the folks that are so rich they can buy everything, and the folks that are so poor they don't want anything. It makes nice boys of us young fellahs, no doubt ! And it's pleasant to see fine young girls sittin' like shopkeepers behind their goods, waitin', and waitin', and waitin', 'n' no customers,—and the men lingerin' round and lookin' at the goods, like folks that want to be customers, but haven't got the money !

Do you think the deformed gentleman means to make love to Iris? I said.

What ! Little Boston ask that girl to marry him ! Well, now, that's comin' of it a little too strong. Yes, I guess she will marry him and carry him round in a basket, like a lame bantam ! Look here ! he said, mysteriously ;—one of the boarders swears there's a woman comes to see him, and that he has heard her singin' and screechin'. I should like to know what he's about in that den of his. He lays low 'n' keeps dark,—and, I tell you, there's a good many of the boarders would like to get into his chamber, but he don't seem to want 'em. Biddy could tell somethin' about what she's seen when she's been to put his room to rights. She's a Paddy 'n' a fool, but she knows enough to keep her tongue still. All I know is, I saw her crossin' herself one day when she came out of that

room. She looked pale enough, 'n' I heard her mutterin' somethin' or other about the Blessed Virgin. If it hadn't been for the double doors to that chamber of his, I'd have had a squint inside before this; but, somehow or other, it never seems to happen that they're both open at once.

What do you think he employs himself about? said I.

The young man John winked.

I waited patiently for the thought, of which this wink was the blossom, to come to fruit in words.

I don't believe in witches, said the young man John.

Nor I.

We were both silent for a few minutes.

—Did you ever see the young girl's drawing-books, I said, presently.

All but one, he answered; she keeps a lock on that, and won't show it. Ma'am Allen (the young rogue sticks to that name, in speaking of the gentleman with the *diamond*), Ma'am Allen tried to peek into it one day when she left it on the side-board. "If you please," says she,—'n' took it from him, 'n' gave him a look that made him curl up like a caterpillar on a hot shovel. I only wished he hadn't, and had jest given her a little saas, for I've been takin' boxin'-lessons, 'n' I've got a new way of counterin' I want to try on to somebody.

—The end of all this was, that I came away from the young fellow's room, feeling that there were two principal things that I had to live for, the next six weeks or six months, if it should take so long. These were to get a sight of the young girl's drawing-book, which I suspected had her heart shut up in it, and to get a look into the Little Gentleman's room.

I don't doubt you think it rather absurd that I should trouble myself about these matters. You tell me, with some show of reason, that all I shall find in the young girl's book will be some outlines of angels with immense eyes, traceries of flowers, rural sketches, and caricatures, among which I shall probably have the pleasure of seeing my own features figuring. Very likely. But I'll tell you what I think I shall find. If this child has idealized the strange little bit of humanity over which she seems to have spread her wings like a brooding dove,—if, in one of those wild vagaries that passionate natures are so liable to, she has fairly sprung upon him with her claspin' nature, as the sea-flowers fold about the first stray shell-fish that brushes their outspread tentacles, depend upon it, I shall find the marks of it in this drawing-book of hers,—if I can ever get a look at it,—fairly, of course, for I would not play tricks to satisfy my curiosity.

Then, if I can get into this Little Gentleman's room under any fair pretext, I shall, no doubt, satisfy myself in five

minutes that he is just like other people, and that there is no particular mystery about him.

The night after my visit to the young man John, I made all these and many more reflections. It was about two o'clock in the morning,—bright starlight,—so light that I could make out the time on my alarm-clock,—when I woke up trembling and very moist. It was the heavy, dragging sound, as I had often heard it before, that waked me. Presently a window was softly closed. I had just begun to get over the agitation with which we always awake from nightmare dreams, when I heard the sound which seemed to me as of a woman's voice,—the clearest, purest soprano which one could well conceive of. It was not loud, and I could not distinguish a word, if it was a woman's voice ; but there were recurring phrases of sound and snatches of rhythm that reached me, which suggested the idea of complaint, and sometimes, I thought, of passionate grief and despair. It died away at last,—and then I heard the opening of a door, followed by a low, monotonous sound, as of one talking,—and then the closing of a door,—and presently the light on the opposite wall disappeared and all was still for the night.

By George ! this gets interesting, I said, as I got out of bed for a change of night-clothes.

I had this in my pocket the other day, but thought I wouldn't read it at our celebration. So I read it to the boarders instead, and print it to finish off this record with.

#### ROBINSON OF LEYDEN.

He sleeps not here ; in hope and prayer  
His wandering flock had gone before,  
But he, the shepherd, might not share  
Their sorrows on the wintry shore.

Before the Speedwell's anchor swung,  
Ere yet the Mayflower's sail was spread,  
While round his feet the Pilgrims clung,  
The pastor spoke, and thus he said :—

" Men, brethren, sisters, children dear !  
God calls you hence from over sea ;  
Ye may not build by Haarlem Meer,  
Nor yet along the Zuyder-Zee.

" Ye go to hear the saving word  
To tribes unnamed and shores untried ;  
Hear well the lessons ye have heard  
From those old teachers taught of God.

" Yet think not unto them was lent  
All light for all the coming days,  
And Heaven's eternal wisdom spent  
In making straight the ancient ways.

"The living fountain overflows  
For every flock, for every lamb,  
Nor heeds, though angry creeds oppose  
With Luther's dyke or Calvin's dam."

He spake ; with lingering, long embrace,  
With tears of love and partings fond,  
They floated down the creeping Maas,  
Along the isle of Ysselmond.

They passed the frowning towers of Briel,  
The "Hook of Holland's" shelf of sand,  
And grated soon with lifting keel  
The sullen shores of Fatherland.

No home for these !—too well they knew  
The mitred king behind the throne ;—  
The sails were set, the pennons flew,  
And westward ho ! for worlds unknown.

—And these were they who gave us birth,  
The Pilgrims of the sunset wave,  
Who won for us this virgin earth,  
And freedom with the soil they gave.

The pastor slumbers by the Rhine,—  
In alien earth the exiles lie,—  
Their nameless graves our holiest shrine,  
His words our noblest battle-cry !

Still cry them, and the world shall hear,  
Ye dwellers by the storm-swept sea !  
Ye *have* not built by Haarlem Meer,  
Nor on the land-locked Zuyder-Zee !

## VIII.

**T**HERE has been a sort of stillness in the atmosphere of our boarding-house since my last record, as if something or other were going on. There is no particular change that I can think of in the aspect of things; yet I have a feeling as if some game of life were quietly playing and strange forces were at work, underneath this smooth surface of every-day boarding-house life, which would show themselves some fine morning or other in events, if not in catastrophes. I have been watchful, as I said I should be, but have little to tell as yet. You may laugh at me, and very likely think me foolishly fanciful to trouble myself about what is going on in a middling-class household like ours. — Do as you like. But here is that terrible fact to begin with,—a beautiful young girl, with the blood and the nerve-fibre that belong to Nature's woman, turned loose among live men.

—Terrible fact?

Very terrible. Nothing more so. Do you forget the angels who lost heaven for the daughters of men? Do you forget Helen, and the fair woman who made mischief and set nations by the ears before Helen was born? If jealousies that gnaw men's hearts out of their bodies,—if pangs that waste men to shadows and drive them into raving madness or moping melancholy,—if assassination and suicide are dreadful possibilities, then there is always something frightful about a lovely young woman. I love to look at this "Rainbow," as her father used sometimes to call her, of ours. Handsome creature that she is in forms and colours,—the very picture, as it seems to me, of that "golden blonde" my friend whose book you read last year fell in love with when he was a boy (as you remember, no doubt),—handsome as she is, fit for a sea-king's bride, it is not her beauty alone that holds my eyes upon her. Let me tell you one of my fancies, and then you will understand the strange sort of fascination she has for me.

It is in the hearts of many men and women—let me add children—that there is a *Great Secret* waiting for them,—a secret of which they get hints now and then, perhaps oftener in early than in later years. These hints come sometimes in dreams, sometimes in sudden startling flashes,—second wakings, as it were,—a waking out of the waking state, which last is very apt to be a half-sleep. I have many times stopped short and held my breath, and felt the blood leaving my cheeks, in one of these sudden clairvoyant flashes. Of course I cannot tell what kind of a secret this is; but I think of it as a disclosure of certain relations of our personal being to time and space, to other intelligences, to the procession of events, and to their First Great Cause. This secret seems to be broken up, as it were, into fragments, so that we find here a word and there a syllable, and then again only a letter of it; but it never is written out for most of us as a complete sentence, in this life. I do not think it could be; for I am disposed to consider our beliefs about such a possible disclosure rather as a kind of premonition of an enlargement of our faculties in some future state than as an expectation to be fulfilled for most of us in this life. Persons, however, have fallen into trances,—as did the Reverend William Tennent, among many others,—and learned some things which they could not tell in our human words.

Now among the visible objects which hint to us fragments of this infinite secret for which our souls are waiting, the faces of women are those that carry the most legible hieroglyphics of the great mystery. There are women's faces, some real, some ideal, which contain something in them that becomes a positive element in our creed, so direct and palpable a revelation is it of the infinite purity and love. I remember two faces of

women with wings, such as they call angels, of Fra Angelico,—and I just now came across a print of Raphael's Santa Apollina, with something of the same quality,—which I was sure had their prototypes in the world above ours. No wonder the Catholics pay their vows to the Queen of Heaven! The unpoetical side of Protestantism is, that it has no women to be worshipped.

But mind you, it is not every beautiful face that hints the Great Secret to us, nor is it only in beautiful faces that we find traces of it. Sometimes it looks out from a sweet sad eye, the only beauty of a plain countenance; sometimes there is so much meaning in the lips of a woman, not otherwise fascinating, that we know they have a message for us, and wait almost with awe to hear their accents. But this young girl has at once the beauty of feature and the unspoken mystery of expression. Can she tell me anything? Is her life a complement of mine, with the missing element in it which I have been groping after through so many friendships that I have tired of, and through—Hush! Is the door fast? Talking loud is a bad trick in these curious boarding-houses.

You must have sometimes noted this fact that I am going to remind you of and to use for a special illustration. Riding along over a rocky road, suddenly the slow monotonous grinding of the crushing gravel changes to a deep heavy rumble. There is a great hollow under your feet,—a huge unsunned cavern. Deep, deep beneath you, in the core of the living rock, it arches its awful vault, and far away it stretches its winding galleries, their roofs dripping into streams where fishes have been swimming and spawning in the dark until their scales are white as milk and their eyes have withered out, obsolete and useless.

So it is in life. We jog quietly along, meeting the same faces, grinding over the same thoughts,—the gravel of the soul's highway,—now and then jarred against an obstacle we cannot crush, but must ride over or round as we best may, sometimes bringing short up against a disappointment, but still working along with the creaking and rattling and grating and jerking that belong to the journey of life, even in the smoothest-rolling vehicle. Suddenly we hear the deep under-ground reverberation that reveals the unsuspected depth of some abyss of thought or passion beneath us.

I wish the girl would go. I don't like to look at her so much, and yet I cannot help it. Always that same expression of something I ought to know,—something that she was made to tell and I to hear,—lying there ready to fall off from her lips, ready to leap out of her eyes and make a saint of me, or a devil or a lunatic, or perhaps a prophet to tell the truth and be hated of men, or a poet whose words shall flash upon the dry stubble-



field of worn-out thoughts and burn over an age of lies in an hour of passion.

It suddenly occurs to me that I may have put you on the wrong track. The Great Secret that I refer to has nothing to do with the Three Words. Set your mind at ease about that,—there are reasons I could give you which settle all that matter. I don't wonder, however, that you confounded the Great Secret with the Three Words.

I LOVE YOU is all the secret that many, nay, most women have to tell. When that is said, they are like China-crackers on the morning of the fifth of July. And just as that little patriotic implement is made with a slender train which leads to the magazine in its interior, so a sharp eye can almost always see the train leading from a young girl's eye or lip to the "I love you" in her heart. But the Three Words are not the Great Secret I mean. No, women's faces are only one of the tablets on which that is written in its partial, fragmentary symbols. It lies deeper than Love, though very probably Love is a part of it. Some, I think,—Wordsworth might be one of them,—spell out a portion of it from certain beautiful natural objects, landscapes, flowers, and others. I can mention several poems of his that have shadowy hints which seem to me to come near the region where I think it lies. I have known two persons who pursued it with the passion of the old alchemists,—all wrong evidently, but infatuated, and never giving up the daily search for it until they got tremulous and feeble, and their dreams changed to visions of things that ran and crawled about their floor and ceilings, and so they died. The vulgar called them drunkards.

I told you that I would let you know the mystery of the effect this young girl's face produces on me. It is akin to those influences a friend of mine has described, you may remember, as coming from certain *voices*. I cannot translate it into words,—only into feelings ; and these I have attempted to shadow by showing that her face hinted that revelation of something we are close to knowing, which all imaginative persons are looking for either in this world or on the very threshold of the next.

You shake your head at the vagueness and fanciful incomprehensibility of my description of the expression of a young girl's face. You forget what a miserable surface-matter this language is in which we try to reproduce our interior state of being. Articulation is a shallow trick. From the light *Poh !* which we toss off from our lips as we fling a nameless scribbler's impertinences into our waste-baskets, to the gravest utterance which comes from our throats in our moments of deepest need, is only a space of some three or four inches. Words, which are a set of clickings, hissings, lisps, and so on, mean very little.

compared to tone and expression of the features. I give it up ; I thought I could shadow forth in some feeble way, by their aid, the effect this young girl's face produces on my imagination ; but it is of no use. No doubt your head aches, trying to make something of my description. If there is here and there one that can make anything intelligible out of my talk about the Great Secret, and who has spelt out a syllable or two of it on some woman's face, dead or living, that is all I can expect. One should see the person with whom he converses about such matters. There are dreamy-eyed people to whom I should say all these things with a certainty of being understood !—

That moment that his face I see,  
I know the man that must hear me :  
To him my tale I teach.

—I am afraid some of them have not got a spare quarter of a dollar for this August number, so that they will never see it.

—Let us start again, just as if we had not made this ambitious attempt, which may go for nothing, and you can have your money refunded, if you will make the change.

This young girl, about whom I have talked so unintelligibly, is the unconscious centre of attraction to the whole solar system of our breakfast-table. The Little Gentleman leans towards her, and she again seems to be swayed as by some invisible gentle force towards him. That slight inclination of two persons with a strong affinity towards each other, throwing them a little out of plumb when they sit side by side, is a physical fact I have often noticed. Then there is a tendency in all the men's eyes to converge on her ; and I do firmly believe that, if all their chairs were examined, they would be found a little obliquely placed, so as to favour the direction in which their occupants love to look.

That bland, quiet old gentleman, of whom I have spoken as sitting opposite to me, is no exception to the rule. She brought down some mignonette one morning, which she had grown in her chamber. She gave a sprig to her little neighbour, and one to the landlady, and sent another by the hand of Bridget to this old gentleman.

—Sarvant, Ma'am ! Much obleeged, he said, and put it gallantly in his button-hole. After breakfast he must see some of her drawings. Very fine performances,—very fine !—truly elegant productions,—truly elegant !—Had seen Miss Linley's needle-work in London, in the year (eighteen hundred and little or nothing, I think he said)—patronized by the nobility and gentry, and Her Majesty,—elegant, truly elegant productions, very fine performances ; these drawings reminded him of them ;

—wonderful resemblance to Nature ; an extraordinary art, painting ; Mr. Copley made some very fine pictures that he remembered seeing when he was a boy. Used to remember some lines about a portrait written by Mr. Cowper, beginning.—

“ Oh that those lips had language ! Life has pass'd  
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.”

And with this the old gentleman fell to thinking about a dead mother of his that he remembered ever so much younger than he now was, and looking, not as his mother but as his daughter should look. The dead young mother was looking at the old man, her child, as she used to look at him so many, many years ago. He stood still as if in a waking dream, his eyes fixed on the drawings till their outlines grew indistinct, and they ran into each other, and a pale, sweet face shaped itself out of the glimmering light through which he saw them. What is there quite so profoundly human as an old man's memory of a mother who died in his earlier years? Mother she remains till manhood, and by-and-by she grows to be as a sister ; and at last, when, wrinkled and bowed and broken, he looks back upon her in her fair youth, he sees in the sweet image he caresses not his parent, but, as it were, his child.

If I had not seen all this in the old gentleman's face, words with which he broke his silence would have betrayed train of thought.

—If they had only taken pictures then as they do now !—he said. All gone ! all gone ! nothing but her face as she leaned on the arms of her great chair ; and I would give a hundred pound for the poorest little picture of her, such as you can buy for a shilling of anybody that you don't want to see.—The old gentleman put his hand to his forehead so as to shade his eyes. I saw he was looking at the dim photograph of memory, and turned from him to Iris.

How many drawing-books have you filled, I said, since you began to take lessons? This was the first, she answered, since she was here ; and it was not full, but there were many separate sheets of large size she had covered with drawings.

I turned over the leaves of the book before us. Academic studies, principally of the human figure. Heads of sibyls, prophets, and so forth. Limbs from statues. Hands and feet from Nature. What a superb drawing of an arm ! I don't remember it among the figures from Michael Angelo, which seem to have been her patterns mainly. From Nature, I think, or after a cast from Nature. Oh !

—Your smaller studies are in this, I suppose, I said, taking up the drawing-book with a lock on it.—Yes, she said.—I should like to see her style of working on a small scale.—

There was nothing in it worth showing, she said ; and presently I saw her try the lock, which proved to be fast. We are all caricatured in it, I haven't the least doubt. I think, though, I could tell by her way of dealing with us what her fancies were about us boarders. Some of them act as if they were bewitched with her, but she does not seem to notice it much. Her thoughts seem to be on her little neighbour more than on anybody else. The young fellow John appears to stand second in her good graces. I think he has once or twice sent her what the landlady's daughter calls *bó-kays* of flowers,—somebody has at any rate. I saw a book she had, which must have come from the Divinity-Student. It had a dreary title-page, which she had enlivened with a fancy portrait of the author,—a face from memory, apparently—one of those faces that small children loathe without knowing why, and which give them that inward disgust for heaven so many of the little wretches betray, when they hear that these are “good men,” and that heaven is full of such. —The gentleman with the *diamond*—the Koh-i-noor, so called by us—was not encouraged, I think, by the reception of his packet of perfumed soap. He pulls his purple moustache and looks appreciatingly at Iris, who never sees him, as it should seem. The young Marylander, who I thought would have been in love with her before this time, sometimes looks from his corner across the long diagonal of the table, as much as to say, I wish you were up here by me, or I were down there by you,—which would, perhaps, be a more natural arrangement than the present one. But nothing comes of all this,—and nothing has come of my sagacious idea of finding out the girl's fancies by looking into her locked drawing-book.

Not to give up all the questions I was determined to solve, I made an attempt also to work into the Little Gentleman's chamber. For this purpose, I kept him in conversation, one morning, until he was just ready to go up-stairs, and then, as if to continue the talk, followed him as he toiled back to his room. He rested on the landing, and faced round toward me. There was something in his eye which said, Stop there ! So we finished our conversation on the landing. The next day, I mustered assurance enough to knock at his door, having a pretext ready. —No answer.—Knock again. A door, as if of a cabinet, was shut softly and locked, and presently I heard the peculiar dead beat of his thick-soled, misshapen boots. The bolts and the lock of the inner door were unfastened, with unnecessary noise, I thought, and he came into the passage. He pulled the inner door after him, and opened the outer one at which I stood. He had on a flowered silk dressing-gown, such as “Mr. Copley” used to paint his old-fashioned merchant-princes in ; and a quaint-looking key in his hand. Our conversation was short,

but long enough to convince me that the Little Gentleman did not want my company in his chamber, and did not mean to have it.

I have been making a great fuss about what is no mystery at all,—a schoolgirl's secrets and a whimsical man's habits. I mean to give up such nonsense and mind my own business.—Hark ! What the deuce is that odd noise in his chamber ?

— I think I am a little superstitious. There were two things, when I was a boy, that diabolized my imagination,—I mean, that gave me a distinct apprehension of a formidable bodily shape which prowled round the neighbourhood where I was born and bred. The first was a series of marks called the “Devil's footsteps.” These were patches of sand in the pastures, where no grass grew, where even the low-bush blackberry, the “dewberry,” as our Southern neighbours call it, in prettier and more Shaksperian language, did not spread its clinging creepers,—where even the pale, dry, sadly-sweet “everlasting” could not grow, but all was bare and blasted. The second was a mark in one of the public buildings near my home,—the college dormitory named after a Colonial Governor. I do not think many persons are aware of the existence of this mark,—little having been said about the story in print, as it was considered very desirable, for the sake of the Institution, to hush it up. In the northwest corner, and on the level of the third or fourth story, there are signs of a breach in the walls, mended pretty well, but not to be mistaken. A considerable portion of that corner must have been carried away, from within outward. It was an unpleasant affair ; and I do not care to repeat the particulars ; but some young men had been using sacred things in a profane and unlawful way, when the occurrence, which was variously explained, took place. The story of the Appearance in the chamber was, I suppose, invented afterwards ; but of the injury to the building there could be no question ; and the zig-zag line, where the mortar is a little thicker than before, is still distinctly visible. The queer burnt spots, called the “Devil's footsteps,” had never attracted attention before this time, though there is no evidence that they had not existed previously, except that of the late Miss M., a “Goody,” so called, or sweeper, who was positive on the subject, but had a strange horror of referring to an affair of which she was thought to know something.—I tell you it was not so pleasant for a little boy of impressible nature to go up to bed in an old gambrel-roofed house, with untenanted locked upper-chambers, and a most ghostly garret,—with the “Devil's footsteps” in the fields behind the house, and in front of it the patched dormitory where the unexplained occurrence had taken place which *startled those godless youths* at their mock devotions, so that

one of them was epileptic from that day forward, and another, after a dreadful season of mental conflict, took holy orders and became renowned for his ascetic sanctity.

There were other circumstances that kept up the impression produced by these two singular facts I have just mentioned. There was a dark storeroom, on looking through the key-hole of which, I could dimly see a heap of chairs and tables, and other four-footed things, which seemed to me to have rushed in there, frightened, and in their fright to have huddled together and climbed up on each other's backs,—as the people did in that awful crush where so many were killed, at the execution of Holloway and Haggerty. Then the Lady's portrait, up-stairs, with the sword-thrusts through it—marks of the British officers' rapiers,—and the tall mirror in which they used to look at their red coats,—confound them for smashing its mate!—and the deep, cunningly-wrought arm-chair in which Lord Percy used to sit while his hair was dressing;—he was a gentleman, and always had it covered with a large *peignoir*, to save the silk covering my grandmother embroidered. Then the little room down-stairs, from which went the orders to throw up a bank of earth on the hill yonder, where you may now observe a granite obelisk,—“the study,” in my father's time, but in those days the council-chamber of armed men,—sometimes filled with soldiers;—come with me, and I will show you the “dents” left by the butts of their muskets all over the floor.—With all these suggestive objects round me, aided by the wild stories those awful country-boys that came to live in our service brought with them,—of contracts written in blood and left out over night, not to be found the next morning (removed by the Evil One, who takes his nightly round among our dwellings, and filed away for future use),—of dreams coming true,—of death-signs,—of apparitions, no wonder that my imagination got excited, and I was liable to superstitious fancies.

Jeremy Bentham's logic, by which he proved that he couldn't possibly see a ghost, is all very well—in the day-time. All the reason in the world will never get those impressions of childhood, created by just such circumstances as I have been telling, out of a man's head. That is the only excuse I have to give for the nervous kind of curiosity with which I watch my little neighbour, and the obstinacy with which I lie awake whenever I hear anything going on in his chamber after midnight.

But whatever further observations I may have made must be deferred for the present. You will see in what way it happened that my thoughts were turned from spiritual matters to bodily ones, and how I got my fancy full of material images,—faces, heads, figures, muscles, and so forth,—in such a way that I

should have no chance in this number to gratify any curiosity you may feel, if I had the means of so doing.

Indeed, I have come pretty near omitting my periodical record this time. It was all the work of a friend of mine, who would have it that I should sit to him for my portrait. When a soul draws a body in the great lottery of life, where every one is sure of a prize, such as it is, the said soul inspects the said body with the same curious interest with which one who has ventured into a "gift enterprise" examines the "massive silver pencil-case" with the coppery smell and impressible tube, or the "splendid gold ring" with the questionable specific gravity, which it has been his fortune to obtain in addition to his purchase.

The soul, having studied the article of which it finds itself proprietor, thinks, after a time, it knows it pretty well. But there is this difference between its view and that of a person looking at us:—we look from within, and see nothing but the mould formed by the elements in which we are incased : other observers look from without, and see us as living statues. To be sure, by the aid of mirrors, we get a few glimpses of our outside aspect ; but this occasional impression is always modified by that look of the soul from within outward which none but ourselves can take. A portrait is apt, therefore, to be a surprise to us. The artist looks only from without. He sees us, too, with a hundred aspects on our faces we are never likely to see. No genuine expression can be studied by the subject of it in the looking-glass.

More than this ; he sees us in a way in which many of our friends or acquaintances never see us. Without wearing any mask we are conscious of, we have a special face for each friend. For, in the first place, each puts a special reflection of himself upon us, on the principle of assimilation you found referred to in my last record, if you happened to read that document. And secondly, each of our friends is capable of seeing just so far, and no farther, into our face, and each sees in it the particular thing that he looks for. Now the artist, if he is truly an artist, does not take any one of these special views. Suppose he should copy you as you appear to the man who wants your name to a subscription list, you could hardly expect a friend who entertains you to recognize the likeness to the smiling face which sheds its radiance at his board. Even within your own family, I am afraid there is a face which the rich uncle knows, that is not so familiar to the poor relation. The artist must take one or the other, or something compounded of the two, or something different from either. What the daguerreotype and photograph do is to give the features and one particular look, the very look which kills all expression, that of self-conscious-



ness. The artist throws you off your guard, watches you in movement and in repose, puts your face through its exercises, observes its transitions, and so gets the whole range of its expression. Out of all this he forms an ideal portrait, which is not a copy of your exact look at any one time or to any particular person. Such a portrait cannot be to everybody what the ungloved call "as nat'ral as life." Every good picture, therefore, must be considered wanting in resemblance by many persons.

There is one strange revelation which comes out, as the artist shapes your features from his outline. It is that you resemble so many relatives to whom you yourself never had noticed any particular likeness in your countenance.

He is at work at me now, when I catch some of these resemblances, thus :—

There ! that is just the look my father used to have sometimes ; I never thought I had a sign of it. The mother's eyebrow and grayish-blue eye, those I knew I had. But there is a something which recalls a smile that faded away from my sister's lips—how many years ago ! I thought it so pleasant in her, that I love myself better for having a trace of it.

Are we not young ? Are we not fresh and blooming ? Wait a bit. The artist takes a mean little brush and draws three fine lines, diverging outwards from the eye over the temple. Five years.—The artist draws one tolerably distinct and two faint lines, perpendicularly between the eyebrows. Ten years.—The artist breaks up the contours round the mouth, so that they look a little as a hat does that has been sat upon and recovered itself, ready, as one would say, to crumple up again in the same creases, on smiling or other change of feature.—Hold on ! Stop that ! Give a young fellow a chance ! Are we not whole years short of that interesting period of life when Mr. Balzac says that a man, etc., etc., etc. ?

There now ! That is ourself, as we look after finishing an article, getting a three-mile pull with the ten-foot sculls, redressing the wrongs of the toilet, and standing with the light of hope in our eye and the reflection of a red curtain on our cheek ? Is he not a POET that painted us ?

"Blest be the art that can immortalize !"

COWPER.

—Young folks look on a face as a unit ; children who go to school with any given little John Smith see in his name a distinctive appellation, and in his features as special and definite an expression of his sole individuality as if he were the first created of his race. As soon as we are old enough to get the range of three or four generations well in hand, and to take in large



family histories, we never see an individual in a face of any stock we know, but a mosaic copy of a pattern, with fragmentary tints from this and that ancestor. The analysis of a face into its ancestral elements requires that it should be examined in the very earliest infancy, before it has lost that ancient and solemn look it brings with it out of the past eternity; and again in that brief space when Life, the mighty sculptor, has done his work, and Death, his silent servant, lifts the veil and lets us look at the marble lines he has wrought so faithfully; and lastly, while a painter who can seize all the traits of a countenance is building it up feature after feature, from the slight outline to the finished portrait.

— I am satisfied that, as we grow older, we learn to look upon our bodies more and more as a temporary possession, and less and less as identified with ourselves. In early years, while the child "feels its life in every limb," it lives in the body and for the body to a very great extent. It ought to be so. There have been many very interesting children who have shown a wonderful indifference to the things of earth and an extraordinary development of the spiritual nature. There is a perfect literature of their biographies, all alike in their essentials; the same "disinclination to the usual amusements of childhood;" the same remarkable sensibility; the same docility; the same conscientiousness; in short, an almost uniform character, marked by beautiful traits, which we look at with a painful admiration. It will be found that most of these children are the subjects of some constitutional unfitness for living, the most frequent of which I need not mention. They are like the beautiful, blushing, half-grown fruit that falls before its time because its core is gnawed out. They have their meaning,—they do not live in vain,—but they are windfalls. I am convinced that many healthy children are injured morally by being forced to read too much about these little meek sufferers and their spiritual exercises. Here is a boy that loves to run, swim, kick football, turn somersets, make faces, whittle, fish, tear his clothes, coast, skate, fire crackers, blow squash "tooters," cut his name on fences, read about Robinson Crusoe and Sinbad the Sailor, eat the widest-angled slices of pie and untold cakes and candies, crack nuts with his back teeth, and bite out the better part of another boy's apple with his front ones, turn up coppers, "stick" knives, call names, throw stones, knock off hats, set mousetraps, chalk doorsteps, "cut behind" anything on wheels or runners, whistle through his teeth, "holler" Fire! on slight evidence, run after soldiers, patronize an engine-company, or, in his own words, "blow for tub No. 11," or whatever it may be;—isn't that a pretty nice sort of a boy, though he has not got anything the matter with him that takes the taste of this

world out? Now, when you put into such a hot-blooded, hard-fisted, round-cheeked little rogue's hand a sad-looking volume or pamphlet, with the portrait of a thin, white-faced child, whose life is really as much a training for death as the last month of a condemned criminal's existence, what does he find in common between his own overflowing and exulting sense of vitality and the experiences of the doomed offspring of invalid parents? The time comes when we have learned to understand the music of sorrow, the beauty of resigned suffering, the holy light that plays over the pillow of those who die before their time in humble hope and trust. But it is not until he has worked his way through the period of honest hearty animal existence, which every robust child should make the most of,—not until he has learned the use of his various faculties, which is his first duty—that a boy of courage and animal vigour is in a proper state to read these tearful records of premature decay. I have no doubt that disgust is implanted in the minds of many healthy children by early surfeits of pathological piety. I do verily believe that He who took children in His arms and blessed them loved the healthiest and most playful of them just as well as those who were richest in the tuberculous virtues. I know what I am talking about, and there are more parents in this country who will be willing to listen to what I say than there are fools to pick a quarrel with me. In the sensibility and the sanctity which often accompany premature decay I see one of the most beautiful instances of the principle of compensation which marks the Divine benevolence. But to get the spiritual hygiene of robust natures out of the exceptional regimen of invalids is just simply what we Professors call “bad practice”; and I know by experience that there are worthy people who not only try it on their own children, but actually force it on those of their neighbours!

— Having been photographed, and stereographed, and chromatographed, or done in colours, it only remained to be phrenologized. A polite note from Messrs. Bumpus and Crane, requesting our attendance at their Physiological Emporium, was too tempting to be resisted. We repaired to that scientific Golgotha.

Messrs. Bumpus and Crane are arranged on the plan of the man and the woman in the toy called a “weather-house,” both on the same wooden arm suspended on a pivot,—so that when one comes to the door, the other retires backwards, and *vice versa*. The more particular speciality of one is to lubricate your entrance and exit,—that of the other to polish you off phrenologically in the recesses of the establishment. Suppose yourself in a room full of casts and pictures, before a counter full of books with taking titles. I wonder if the picture of the

brain is there, "approved" by a noted Phrenologist, which was copied from *my*, the Professor's, folio plate in the work of Gall and Spurzheim. An extra convolution, No. 9, *Destructiveness*, according to the list beneath, which was not to be seen in the plate, itself a copy of Nature, was very liberally supplied by the artist, to meet the wants of the catalogue of "organs." Professor Bumpus is seated in front of a row of women,—horn-combers and gold-beaders, or somewhere about that range of life,—looking so credulous, that if any Second-Advent Miller or Joe Smith should come along, he could string the whole lot of them on his cheapest lie, as a boy strings a dozen "shiners" on a stripped twig of willows.

The Professor (meaning ourselves) is in a hurry, as usual; let the horn-combers wait,—he shall be bumped without inspecting the antechamber.

Tape round the head,—22 inches. (Come on, old 23 inches, if you think you are the better man!)

Feels thorax and arm, and nuzzles round among muscles as those horrid old women poke their fingers into the salt-meat on the provision-stalls at the Quincy Market. Vitality, No. 5 or 6, or something or other. *Victuality* (organ at epigastrium), some other number equally significant.

Mild champooing of head now commences. Extraordinary revelations! Cupidiphilous, 6! Hymeniphilous, 6+! Pædiphilous, 5! Deipniphilous, 6! Gelasmiphilous, 6! Musikiophilous, 5! Uraniphilous, 5! Glossiphilous, 8!! and so on. Meant for a linguist.—Invaluable information. Will invest in grammars and dictionaries immediately.—I have nothing against the grand total of my phrenological endowments.

I never set great store by my head, and did not think Messrs. Bumpus and Crane would give me so good a lot of organs as they did, especially considering that I was a *dead-head* on that occasion. Much obliged to them for their politeness. They have been useful in their way by calling attention to important physiological facts. (This concession is due to our immense bump of Candour.)

### A SHORT LECTURE ON PHRENOLOGY,

*Read to the Boarders at our Breakfast-Table.*

I shall begin, my friends, with the definition of a *Pseudo-science*. A Pseudo-science consists of a *nomenclature*, with a self-adjusting arrangement, by which all positive evidence, or such as favours its doctrines, is admitted, and all negative evidence, or such as tells against it, is excluded. It is invariably connected with some lucrative practical application. Its professors and practitioners are usually shrewd people; they are

very serious with the public, but wink and laugh a good deal among themselves. The believing multitude consists of women of both sexes, feeble-minded inquirers, poetical optimists, people who always get cheated in buying horses, philanthropists who insist on hurrying up the millennium, and others of this class, with here and there a clergyman, less frequently a lawyer, very rarely a physician, and almost never a horse-jockey or a member of the detective police.—I did not say that Phrenology was one of the Pseudo-sciences.

A Pseudo-science does not necessarily consist wholly of lies. It may contain many truths, and even valuable ones. The rottenest bank starts with a little specie. It puts out a thousand promises to pay on the strength of a single dollar, but the dollar is very commonly a good one. The practitioners of the Pseudo-sciences know that common minds, after they have been baited with a real fact or two, will jump at the merest rag of a lie, or even at the bare hook. When we have one fact found us, we are very apt to supply the next out of our own imagination. (How many persons can read Judges xv. 16 correctly the first time?) The Pseudo-sciences take advantage of this.—I did not say that it was so with Phrenology.

I have rarely met a sensible man who would not allow that there was *something* in Phrenology. A broad, high forehead, it is commonly agreed, promises intellect ; one that is “villanous low,” and has a huge hind-head back of it, is wont to mark an animal nature. I have as rarely met an unbiassed and sensible man who really believed in the bumps. It is observed, however, that persons with what the Phrenologists call “good heads” are more prone than others towards plenary belief in the doctrine.

It is so hard to prove a negative, that if a man should assert that the moon was in truth a green cheese, formed by the coagulable substance of the Milky Way, and challenge me to prove the contrary, I might be puzzled. But if he offer to sell me a ton of this lunar cheese, I call on him to prove the truth of the caseous nature of our satellite, before I purchase.

It is not necessary to prove the falsity of the phrenological statement. It is only necessary to show that its truth is not proved, and cannot be, by the common course of argument. The walls of the head are double, with a great air-chamber between them, over the smallest and most closely crowded “organs.” Can you tell how much money there is in a safe, which also has thick double walls, by kneading its knobs with your fingers? So when a man fumbles about my forehead, and talks about the organs of *Individuality*, *Size*, etc., I trust him as much as I should if he felt of the outside of my strong-box and told me that there was a five-dollar or a ten-dollar-bill

under this or that particular rivet. Perhaps there is ; *only he doesn't know anything about it*. But this is a point that I, the Professor, understand, my friends, or ought to, certainly, better than you do. The next argument you will all appreciate.

I proceed, therefore, to explain the self-adjusting mechanism of Phrenology, which is *very similar* to that of the Pseudo-sciences. An example will show it most conveniently.

A. is a notorious thief. Messrs. Bumpus and Crane examine him and find a good-sized organ of Acquisitiveness. Positive fact for Phrenology. Casts and drawings of A. are multiplied, and the bump *does not lose* in the act of copying.—I did not say it gained.—What do you look so for? (to the boarders).

Presently B. turns up, a bigger thief than A. But B. has no bump at all over Acquisitiveness. Negative fact ; goes against Phrenology.—Not a bit of it. Don't you see how small Conscientiousness is? *That's* the reason B. stole.

And then comes C., ten times as much a thief as either A. or B.,—used to steal before he was weaned, and would pick one of his own pockets and put its contents in another, if he could find no other way of committing petty larceny. Unfortunately, C. has a *hollow*, instead of a bump, over Acquisitiveness. Ah ! but just look and see what a bump of Alimentiveness ! Did not C. buy nuts and gingerbread, when a boy, with the money he stole ? Of course you see why he is a thief, and how his example confirms our noble science.

At last comes along a case which is apparently a *settler*, for there is a little brain with vast and varied powers,—a case like that of Byron, for instance. Then comes out the grand reserve-reason which covers everything and renders it simply impossible ever to corner a Phrenologist. “It is not the size alone, but the *quality* of an organ, which determines its degree of power.”

Oh ! oh ! I see.—The argument may be briefly stated thus by the Phrenologist : “Heads I win, tails you lose.” Well, that's convenient.

It must be confessed that Phrenology has a certain resemblance to the Pseudo-sciences.—I did not say it was a Pseudo-science.

I have often met persons who have been altogether struck and amazed at the accuracy with which some wandering Professor of Phrenology had read their characters written upon their skulls. Of course the Professor acquires his information solely through his cranial inspections and manipulations.—What are you laughing at ? (to the boarders).—But let us just *suppose*, for a moment, that a tolerably cunning fellow, who did not know or care anything about Phrenology, should open a *shop* and undertake to read off people's characters at fifty cents

or a dollar apiece. Let us see how well he could get along without the "organs."

I will suppose myself to set up such a shop. I would invest one hundred dollars, more or less, in casts of brains, skulls, charts, and other matters that would make the most show for the money. That would do to begin with. I would then advertise myself as the celebrated Professor Brainey, or whatever name I might choose, and wait for my first customer. My first customer is a middle-aged man. I look at him,—ask him a question or two, so as to hear him talk. When I have got the hang of him, I ask him to sit down, and proceed to fumble his skull, dictating as follows.—

## SCALE FROM 1 TO 10.

## LIST OF FACULTIES FOR CUSTOMER.

## PRIVATE NOTES FOR MY PUPIL:

*Each to be accompanied with a wink.*

*Amativeness, 7.*

Most men love the conflicting sex, and all men love to be told they do.

*Alimentiveness, 8.*

Don't you see that he has burst off his lowest waistcoat - button with feeding,—hey?

*Acquisitiveness, 8.*

Of course. A middle-aged Yankee.

*Approbativeness, 7.+*

Hat well brushed. Hair ditto.

Mark the effect of that *plus* sign.

*Self-esteem, 6.*

His face shows that.

*Benevolence, 9.*

That'll please him.

*Conscientiousness, 8½.*

That fraction looks first-rate.

*Mirthfulness, 7.*

Has laughed twice since he came in.

*Ideality, 9.*

That sounds well.

*Form, Size, Weight, Colour, Locality, Eventuality, etc., etc.*

4 to 6. Average everything that can't be guessed.

And so of the other faculties.

Of course, you know, that isn't the way the Phrenologists do. They go only by the bumps. What do you keep laughing so for? (to the boarders). I only said that is the way *I* should practise "Phrenology" for a living.

## END OF MY LECTURE.

—The Reformers have good heads, generally, Their faces are commonly serene enough, and they are lambs in private intercourse, even though their voices may be like

The wolf's long howl from Oonalaska's shore,

when heard from the platform. Their greatest spiritual danger is from the perpetual *flattery of abuse* to which they are exposed. These lines are meant to caution them.

## SAINT ANTHONY THE REFORMED

## HIS TEMPTATION.

No fear lest praise should make us proud!  
 We know how cheaply that is won;  
 The idle homage of the crowd  
 Is proof of tasks as idly done.

A surface-smile may pay the toil  
 That follows still the conquering Right,  
 With soft, white hands to dress the spoil  
 That sunbrowned valour clutched in fight.

Sing the sweet song of other days,  
 Serenely placid, safely true,  
 And o'er the present's parching ways  
 Thy verse distils like evening dew.

But speak in words of living power,—  
 They fall like drops of scalding rain  
 That plashed before the burning shower  
 Swept o'er the cities of the plain!

Then scowling Hate turns deadly pale,—  
 Then Passion's half-coiled adders spring,  
 And smitten through their leprous mail,  
 Strike right and left in hope to sting.

If thou, unmoved by poisoning wrath,  
 Thy feet on earth, thy heart above,  
 Canst walk in peace thy kingly path,  
 Unchanged in trust, unchilled in love,—

Too kind for bitter words to grieve,  
 Too firm for clamour to dismay,  
 When Faith forbids thee to believe,  
 And Meekness calls to disobey,—

Ah, then beware of mortal pride!  
 The smiling pride that calmly scorns  
 Those foolish fingers, crimson dyed  
 In labouring on thy crown of thorns!

## IX.

ONE of our boarders—perhaps more than one was concerned in it—sent in some questions to me, the other day, which, trivial as some of them are, I felt bound to answer.

1.—Whether a lady was ever known to write a letter covering only a single page?

To this I answered, that there was a case on record where a lady had but half a sheet of paper and no envelope; and bein

obliged to send through the post-office, she *covered* only one side of the paper (crosswise, lengthwise, and diagonally).

2.—What constitutes a man a gentleman?

To this I gave several answers, adapted to particular classes of questioners.

- a. Not trying to be a gentleman.
- b. Self-respect underlying courtesy.
- c. Knowledge and observance of the *fitness of things* in social intercourse.
- d. *£. s. d.* (as many suppose).

3.—Whether face or figure is most attractive in the female sex?

Answered in the following epigram, by a young man about town :—

Quoth Tom, "Though fair her features be,  
It is her figure pleases me."  
"What may her figure be?" I cried.  
"One hundred thousand!" he replied.

When this was read to the boarders, the young man John said he should like a chance to "step up" to a figger of that kind, if the girl was one of the right sort.

The landlady said them that merried for money didn't deserve the blessin' of a good wife. Money was a great thing when them that had it made a good use of it. She had seen better days herself, and knew what it was never to want for anything. One of her cousins merried a very rich old gentleman, and she had heerd that he said he lived ten years longer than if he'd staid by himself without anybody to take care of him. There was nothin' like a wife for nussin' sick folks and them that couldn't take care of themselves.

The young man John got off a little wink, and pointed slyly with his thumb in the direction of our diminutive friend, for whom he seemed to think this speech was intended.

If it was meant for him, he didn't appear to know that it was. Indeed, he seems somewhat listless of late, except when the conversation falls upon one of those larger topics that specially interest him, and then he grows excited, speaks loud and fast, sometimes almost savagely,—and, I have noticed once or twice, presses his left hand to his right side, as if there were something that ached, or weighed, or throbbed in that region.

While he speaks in this way, the general conversation is interrupted, and we all listen to him. Iris looks steadily in his face, and then he will turn as if magnetized and meet the amber eyes with his own melancholy gaze. I do believe that they have some kind of understanding together, that they meet elsewhere than at our table, and that there is a mystery, which is going to break upon us all of a sudden, involving the relations



of these two persons. From the very first, they have taken to each other. The one thing they have in common is the heroic will. In him it shows itself in thinking his way straightforward, in doing battle for "free trade and no right of search" on the high seas of religious controversy, and especially in fighting the battles of his crooked old city. In her, it is standing up for her little friend with the most queenly disregard of the code of boarding-house etiquette. People may say or look what they like,—she will have her way about this sentiment of hers.

The Poor Relation is in a dreadful fidget whenever the Little Gentleman says anything that interferes with her own infallibility. She seems to think Faith must go with her face tied up, as if she had the toothache,—and that if she opens her mouth to the quarter the wind blows from, she will catch her "death o' cold."

The landlady herself came to him one day, as I have found out, and tried to persuade him to hold his tongue. The boarders was gettin' uneasy, she said, and some of 'em would go, she mistrusted, if he talked any more about things that belonged to the ministers to settle. She was a poor woman, that had known better days, but all her livin' depended on her boarders, and she was sure there wasn't any of 'em she set so much by as she did by him; but there was them that never liked to hear about sech things, except on Sundays.

The Little Gentleman looked very smiling at the landlady, who smiled even more cordially in return, and adjusted her cap-ribbon with an unconscious movement,—a reminiscence of the long-past pairing-time, when she had smoothed her locks and softened her voice, and won her mate by these and other bird-like graces. My dear madam, he said; I will remember your interest, and speak only of matters to which I am totally indifferent. I don't doubt he meant this; but a day or two after, something stirred him up, and I heard his voice uttering itself aloud, thus :—

—It must be done, sir !—he was saying,—it must be done ! Our religion has been Judaized, it has been Romanized, it has been Orientalized, it has been Anglicized, and the time is at hand when it must be AMERICANIZED ! Now, sir, you see what Americanizing is in politics ;—it means that a man shall have a vote because he is a man,—and shall vote for whom he pleases, without his neighbour's interference. If he chooses to vote for the devil, that is his look-out ;—perhaps he thinks the devil is better than the other candidates ; and I don't doubt he's often right, sir ! Just so a man's soul has a vote in the spiritual community ; and it doesn't do, sir, or it won't do long, to call him "schismatic" and "heretic" and those other wicked names that

the old murderous inquisitors have left us to help along "peace and good-will to men"!

As long as you could catch a man and drop him into an *oubliette*, or pull him out a few inches longer by machinery, or put a hot iron through his tongue, or make him climb up a ladder and sit on a board at the top of a stake so that he should be slowly broiled by the fire kindled round it, there was some sense in these words; they led to something. But since we have done with those tools, we had better give up those words. I should like to see a Yankee advertisement like this! — (the Little Gentleman laughed fiercely as he uttered the words,—)

— Patent thumb-screws,—will crush the bone in three turns.

— The cast-iron boot, with wedge and mallet,—only five dollars!

— The celebrated extension-rack, warranted to stretch a man six inches in twenty minutes,—money returned, if it proves unsatisfactory.

I should like to see ~~such~~ an advertisement, I say, sir! Now, what's the use of using the words that belonged with the thumb-screws, and the Blessed Virgin with the knives under her petticoats and sleeves and bodice, and the *dry pan and gradual fire*, if we can't have the things themselves, sir? What's the use of *painting* the fire round a poor fellow, when you think it won't do to kindle one under him,—as they did at Valencia or Valladolid, or wherever it was!

— What story is that? I said.

Why, he answered,—at the last *auto-da-fé*, in 1824 or '5, or somewhere there,—it's a traveller's story, but a mighty knowing traveller he is, — they had a "heretic" to use up according to the statutes provided for the crime of private opinion. They couldn't quite make up their minds to burn him, so they only *hung* him in a hogshead painted all over with flames!

No, sir! when a man calls you names because you go to the ballot-box and vote for your candidate, or because you say this or that is your opinion, he forgets in which half of the world he was born, sir! It won't be long, sir, before we have Americanized religion as we have Americanized government; and then, sir, every soul God sends into the world will be good in the face of all men for just so much of His "inspiration" as "giveth him understanding"!—None of my words, sir! none of my words!

— If Iris does not love this Little Gentleman, what does love look like when one sees it? She follows him with her eyes, she leans over towards him when he speaks, her face

changes with the changes of his speech, so that one might think it was with her as with Christabel,—

That all her features were resigned  
To this sole image in her mind.

But she never looks at him with such intensity of devotion as when he says anything about the soul and the soul's atmosphere, religion.

Women are twice as religious as men ;—all the world knows that. Whether they are any *better*, in the eyes of Absolute Justice, might be questioned ; for the additional religious element supplied by sex hardly seems to be a matter of praise or blame. But in all common aspects they are so much above us that we get most of our religion from them,—from their teachings, from their example,—above all, from their pure affections.

Now this poor little Iris had been talked to strangely in her childhood. Especially she had been told that she hated all good things,—which every sensible parent knows well enough is not true of a great many children, to say the least. I have sometimes questioned whether many libels on human nature had not been a natural consequence of the celibacy of the clergy, which was enforced for so long a period.

The child had met this and some other equally encouraging statements as to her spiritual conditions, early in life, and fought the battle of spiritual independence prematurely, as many children do. If all she did was hateful to God, what was the meaning of the approving or else the disapproving conscience, when she had done "right" or "wrong"? No "shoulder-striker" hits out straighter than a child with its logic. Why, I can remember lying in my bed in the nursery and settling questions which all that I have heard since and got out of books has never been able to raise again. If a child does not assert itself in this way in good season, it becomes just what its parents or teachers were, and is no better than a plaster image.—How old was I at the time?—I suppose about 5823 years old,—that is, counting from Archbishop Usher's date of the Creation, and adding the life of the race, whose accumulated intelligence is a part of my inheritance, to my own. A good deal older than Plato, you see, and much more experienced than my Lord Bacon and most of the world's teachers.—Old books, as you well know, are books of the world's youth, and new books are fruits of its age. How many of all these ancient folios round me are like so many old cupels ! The gold has passed out of them long ago, but their pores are full of the dross with which it was mingled.

And so Iris—having thrown off that first lasso, which not

only fetters, but *chokes* those whom it can hold, so that they give themselves up trembling and breathless to the great soul-subduer, who has them by the windpipe—had settled a brief creed for herself, in which love of the neighbour, whom we have seen, was the first article, and love of the Creator, whom we have not seen, grew out of this as its natural development, being necessarily second in order of time to the first unselfish emotions which we feel for the fellow-creatures who surround us in our early years.

The child must have some place of worship. What would a young girl be who never mingled her voice with the songs and prayers that rose all around her with every returning day of rest? And Iris was free to choose. Sometimes one and sometimes another would offer to carry her to this or that place of worship; and when the doors were hospitably opened, she would often go meekly in by herself. It was a curious fact, that two churches as remote from each other in doctrine as could well be divided her affections.

The church of Saint Polycarp had very much the look of a Roman Catholic chapel. I do not wish to run the risk of giving names to the ecclesiastical furniture which gave it such a Romish aspect; but there were pictures, and inscriptions in antiquated characters, and there were reading-stands, and flowers on the altar, and other elegant arrangements. Then there were boys to sing alternately in choirs responsive to each other, and there was much bowing, with very loud responding, and a long service and a short sermon, and a bag, such as Judas used to hold in the old pictures, was carried round to receive contributions. Everything was done not only "decently and in order," but, perhaps one might say, with a certain air of magnifying their office on the part of the dignified clergymen, often two or three in number. The music and the free welcome were grateful to Iris, and she forgot her prejudices at the door of the chapel. For this was a church with open doors, with seats for all classes and all colours alike,—a church of zealous worshippers after their faith, of charitable and serviceable men and women, one that took care of its children and never forgot its poor, and whose people were much more occupied in looking out for their own souls than in attacking the faith of their neighbours. In its mode of worship there was a union of two qualities,—the taste and refinement, which the educated require just as much in their churches as elsewhere, and the air of stateliness, almost of pomp, which impresses the common worshipper, and is often not without its effect upon those who think they hold outward forms as of little value. Under the half-Romish aspect of the church of Saint Polycarp, the young girl found a devout and loving and singularly cheerful religious

spirit. The artistic sense, which betrayed itself in the dramatic properties of its ritual, harmonized with her taste. The mingled murmur of the loud responses, in those rhythmic phrases, so simple, yet so fervent, almost as if every tenth heart-beat, instead of its dull *tic-tac*, articulated itself as "Good Lord deliver us!"—the sweet alternation of the two choirs, as their holy song floated from side to side,—the keen young voices rising like a flight of singing-birds that passes from one grove to another, carrying its music with it back and forward,—why should she not love these gracious outward signs of those inner harmonies which none could deny made beautiful the lives of many of her fellow-worshippers in the humble, yet not inelegant chapel of Saint Polycarp?

The young Marylander, who was born and bred to that mode of worship, had introduced her to the chapel, for which he did the honours for such of our boarders as were not otherwise provided for. I saw them looking over the same prayer-book one Sunday, and I could not help thinking that two such young and handsome persons could hardly worship together in safety for a great while. But they seemed to mind nothing but their prayer-book. By-and-by the silken bag was handed round.—I don't believe she will;—so awkward, you know;—besides, she only came by invitation. There she is, with her hand in her pocket, though,—and sure enough, her little bit of silver tinkled as it struck the coin beneath. God bless her! she hasn't much to give; but her eye glistens when she gives it, and that is all Heaven asks.—That was the first time I noticed these young people together, and I am sure they behaved with the most charming propriety,—in fact, there was one of our silent lady-boarders with them, whose eyes would have kept Cupid and Psyche to their good behaviour. A day or two after this I noticed that the young gentleman had left his seat, which you may remember was at the corner diagonal to that of Iris, so that they have been as far removed from each other as they could be at the table. His new seat is three or four places farther down the table. Of course I made a romance out of this, at once. So stupid not to see it! How could it be otherwise? Did you speak, Madam? I beg your pardon. (To my lady-reader.)

I never saw anything like the tenderness with which this young girl treats her little deformed neighbour. If he were in the way of going to church, I know she would follow him. But his worship, if any, is not with the throng of men and women and staring children.

I, the Professor, on the other hand, am a regular church-goer. I should go for various reasons, if I did not love it; but I am happy enough to find great pleasure in the midst of

devout multitudes, whether I can accept all their creeds or not. One place of worship comes nearer than the rest to my ideal standard, and to this it was that I carried our young girl.

The church of the Galileans, as it is called, is even humbler in outside pretensions than the church of Saint Polycarp. Like that, it is open to all comers. The stranger who approaches it looks down a quiet street and sees the plainest of chapels,—a kind of wooden tent, that owes whatever grace it has to its pointed windows and the high, sharp roof,—traces, both, of that upward movement of ecclesiastical architecture which soared aloft in cathedral spires, shooting into the sky as the spike of a flowering aloe from the cluster of broad, sharp-wedged leaves below. This suggestion of mediæval symbolism, aided by a minute turret in which a hand-bell might have hung and found just room enough to turn over, was all of outward show the small edifice could boast. Within there was very little that pretended to be attractive. A small organ at one side, and a plain pulpit, showed that the building was a church; but it was a church reduced to its simplest expression.

Yet when the great and wise monarch of the East sat upon his throne, in all the golden blaze of the spoils of Ophir and the freights of the navy of Tarshish, his glory was not like that of this simple chapel in its Sunday garniture. For the lilies of the field, in their season, and the fairest flowers of the year, in due succession, were clustered every Sunday morning over the preacher's desk. Slight, thin-tissued blossoms of pink and blue and virgin white in early spring, then the full-breasted and deep-hearted roses of summer, then the velvet-robed crimson and yellow flowers of autumn, and in the winter delicate exotics that grew under skies of glass in the false summers of our crystal palaces without knowing that it was the dreadful winter of New England which was rattling the doors and frosting the panes,—in their language the whole year told its history of life and growth and beauty from that simple desk. There was always at least one good sermon,—this floral homily. There was at least one good prayer,—that brief space when all were silent, after the manner of the Friends at their devotions.

Here, too, Iris found an atmosphere of peace and love. The same gentle, thoughtful faces, the same cheerful but reverential spirit, the same quiet, the same life of active benevolence. But in all else how different from the church of Saint Polycarp! No clerical costumes, no ceremonial forms, no carefully trained choirs. A liturgy they have, to be sure, which does not scruple to borrow from the time-honoured manuals of devotion, but also does not hesitate to change its expressions to its own liking.

Perhaps the good people seem a little easy with each other ; —they are apt to nod familiarly, and have even been known to whisper before the minister came in. But it is a relief to get rid of that old Sunday—no,—*Sabbath* face, which suggests the idea that the first day of the week is commemorative of some most mournful event. The truth is, these brethren and sisters meet very much as a family does for its devotions, not putting off their humanity in the least, considering it on the whole quite a delightful matter to come together for prayer and song and good counsel from kind and wise lips. And if they are freer in their demeanour than some very precise congregations, they have not the air of a worldly set of people. Clearly they have *not* come to advertise their tailors and milliners, nor for the sake of exchanging criticisms on the literary character of the sermon they may hear. There is no restlessness and no restraint among these quiet, cheerful worshippers. One thing that keeps them calm and happy during the season so evidently trying to many congregations is, that they join very generally in the singing. In this way they get rid of that accumulated nervous force which escapes in all sorts of fidgety movements, so that a minister trying to keep his congregation still reminds one of a boy with his hand over the nose of a pump which another boy is working,—this spirting impatience of the people is so like the jets that find their way through his fingers, and the grand rush out at the final Amen ! has such a wonderful likeness to the gush that takes place when the boy pulls his hand away, with immense relief, as it seems, to both the pump and the officiating youngster.

How sweet is this blending of all voices and all hearts in one common song of praise ! Some will sing a little loud, perhaps, —and now and then an impatient chorister will get a syllable or two in advance, or an enchanted singer so lose all thought of time and place in the luxury of a closing cadence that he holds on to the last semibreve upon his private responsibility ; but how much more of the spirit of the old Psalmist in the music of these imperfectly trained voices than in the academic niceties of the paid performers who take our musical worship out of our hands !

I am of the opinion that the creed of the church of the Galileans is not laid down in as many details as that of the church of Saint Polycarp. Yet I suspect, if one of the good people from each of those churches had met over the bed of a suffering fellow-creature, or for the promotion of any charitable object, they would have found they had more in common than all the special beliefs or want of beliefs that separated them would amount to. There are always many who believe that the fruits of a tree afford a better test of its condition than a state-



ment of the composts with which it is dressed,—though the last has its meaning and importance, no doubt.

Between these two churches, then, our young Iris divides her affections. But I doubt if she listens to the preacher at either with more devotion than she does to her little neighbour when he talks of these matters.

What does he believe? In the first place, there is some deep-rooted disquiet lying at the bottom of his soul, which makes him very bitter against all kinds of usurpation over the right of private judgment. Over this seems to lie a certain tenderness for humanity in general, bred out of life-long trial, I should say, but sharply streaked with fiery lines of wrath at various individual acts of wrong, especially if they come in an ecclesiastical shape, and recall to him the days when his mother's great-grandmother was strangled on Witch Hill, with a text from the Old Testament for her altar. With all this, he has a boundless belief in the future of this experimental hemisphere, and especially in the destiny of the free thought of its north-eastern metropolis.

— A man can see farther, sir, he said one day,—from the top of Boston State-House, and see more that is worth seeing, than from all the pyramids and turrets and steeples in all the places in the world ! No smoke, sir ; no fog, sir ; and a clean sweep from the Outer Light and the sea beyond it to the New Hampshire mountains ! Yes, sir,—and there are great truths that are higher than mountains and broader than seas, that people are looking for from the tops of these hills of ours,—such as the world never saw, though it might have seen them at Jerusalem if its eyes had been open !—Where do they have most crazy people ? Tell me that, sir !

I answered, that I had heard it said there were more in New England than in most countries, perhaps more than in any part of the world.

Very good, sir, he answered,—When have there been most people killed and wounded in the course of this century ?

During the wars of the French Empire, no doubt, I said.

That's it ! that's it ! said the Little Gentleman ;—where the battle of intelligence is fought, there are most minds bruised and broken ! We're battling for a faith here, sir.

The Divinity-student remarked, that it was rather late in the world's history for men to be looking out for a new faith.

I didn't say a new faith, said the Little Gentleman ;—old or new, it can't help being different here in this American mind of ours from anything that ever was before ; the *people* are new, sir, and that makes the difference. One load of corn goes to the sty, and makes the fat of swine,—another goes to the farmhouse, and becomes the muscle that clothes the right arms of



heroes. It isn't where a pawn stands on the board that makes the difference, but what the game round it is when it is on this or that square.

Can any man look round and see what Christian countries are now doing, and how they are governed, and what is the general condition of society, without seeing that Christianity is the flag under which the world sails, and not the rudder that steers its course? No, sir! There was a great raft built about two thousand years ago,—call it an ark, rather,—the world's great ark! big enough to hold all mankind, and made to be launched right out into the open waves of life,—and here it has been lying, one end on the shore and one end bobbing up and down in the water, men fighting all the time as to who should be captain and who should have the state-rooms, and throwing each other over the side because they could not agree about the points of compass, but the great vessel never getting afloat with its freight of nations and their rulers;—and now, sir, there is and has been for this long time a fleet of "heretic" lighters sailing out of Boston Bay and they have been saying, and they say now, and they mean to keep saying, "Pump out your bilge-water, shovel over your loads of idle ballast, get out your old rotten cargo, and we will carry it out into deep waters and sink it where it will never be seen again; so shall the ark of the world's hope float on the ocean, instead of sticking in the dock-mud where it is lying!"

It's a slow business, this of getting the ark launched. The Jordan wasn't deep enough, and the Tiber wasn't deep enough, and the Rhone wasn't deep enough, and the Thames wasn't deep enough,—and perhaps the Charles isn't deep enough; but I don't feel sure of that, sir, and I love to hear the workmen knocking at the old blocks of tradition and making the ways smooth with the oil of the Good Samaritan. I don't know, sir, but I do think she stirs a little,—I do believe she slides;—and when I think of what a work that is for the dear old three-breasted mother of American liberty, I would not take all the glory of all the greatest cities in the world for my birthright in the soil of little Boston!

— Some of us could not help smiling at this burst of local patriotism, especially when it finished with the last two words.

And Iris smiled, too. But it was the radiant smile of pleasure which always lights up her face when her little neighbour gets excited on the great topics of progress in freedom and religion, and especially on the part which, as he pleases himself with believing, his own city is to take in that consummation of human development to which he looks forward.

Presently she looked into his face with a strange expression, —the anxiety of a mother that sees her child suffering.

You are not well, she said.

I am never well, he answered. His eyes fell mechanically on the death's-head ring he wore on his right hand. She took his hand as if it had been a baby's, and turned the grim device so that it should be out of sight. One slight, sad, slow movement of the head seemed to say, "The death-symbol is still there!"

A very odd personage, to be sure! Seems to know what is going on,—reads books, old and new,—has many recent publications sent him, they tell me,—but, what is more curious, keeps up with the every-day affairs of the world, too. Whether he hears everything that is said with preternatural acuteness, or whether some confidential friend visits him in a quiet way, is more than I can tell. I can make nothing more of the noises I hear in his room than my old conjectures. The movements I mention are less frequent, but I often hear the plaintive cry,—I observe that it is rarely laughing of late;—I never have detected one articulate word, but I never heard such tones from anything but a human voice.

There has been, of late, a deference approaching to tenderness, on the part of the boarders generally, so far as he is concerned. This is doubtless owing to the air of suffering which seems to have saddened his look of late. Either some passion is gnawing at him inwardly, or some hidden disease is at work upon him.

—What's the matter with Little Boston? said the young man John to me one day. There a'n't much of him, anyhow; but 't seems to me he looks peakeder than ever. The old woman says he's in a bad way, 'n' wants a nuss to take care of him. Them nusses that take care of old rich folks marry 'em sometimes, 'n' they don't commonly live a great while after that. *No, sir!* I don't see what he wants to die for, after he's taken so much trouble to live in such poor accommodation as that crooked body of his. I should like to know how his soul crawled into it, 'n' how it's goin' to get out. What business has he to die, I should like to know? Let Ma'am Allen (the gentleman with the *diamond*) die, if he likes, and be (this is a family magazine); but we a'n't goin' to have *him* dyin'. Not by a great sight. Can't do without him anyhow. A'n't it fun to hear him blow off his steam?

I believe the young fellow would take it as a personal insult, if the Little Gentleman should show any symptoms of quitting our table for a better world.

—In the mean time, what with going to church in company with our young lady, and taking every chance I could get to talk with her, I have found myself becoming, I will not say intimate, but well acquainted with Miss Iris. There is a certain

creature this is! She has no special interest in this youth, but she does not like to see a young fellow going off because he feels as if he were not wanted.

She had her locked drawing-book under her arm. Let me take it, I said.

She gave it to me to carry.

This is full of caricatures of all of us, I am sure, said I.

She laughed, and said, No, not all you. I was there of course?

Why, no, she had never taken so much pains with me.

Then she would let me see the inside of it?

She would think of it.

Just as we parted she took a little key from her pocket and handed it to me. This unlocks my naughty book, she said; you shall see it. I am not afraid of you.

I don't know whether the last words exactly pleased me. At any rate, I took the book and hurried with it to my room. I opened it, and saw, in a few glances, that I held the heart of Iris in my hand.

—I have no verses for you this month, except these few lines suggested by the season.

#### MIDSUMMER.

HERE! sweep these foolish leaves away,—  
I will not crush my brains to-day!  
Look! are the southern curtains drawn?  
Fetch me a fan, and so begone!

Not that, the palm-tree's rustling leaf  
Brought from a parching coral-reef!  
Its breath is heated;—I would swing  
The broad gray plumes, the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood!  
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,  
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,  
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odours on the air  
And wheel me up my Indian chair,  
And spread some book not otherwise  
Flat out before my sleeping eyes.

Who knows it not,—this dead recoil  
Of weary fibres stretched with toil;  
The pulse that flutters faint and low  
When Summer's seething breezes blow?

O Nature! bare thy loving breast  
And give thy child one hour of rest,  
One little hour to lie unseen  
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green!

So, curtailed by a singing pine,  
Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine,  
Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay  
In sweeter music dies away.

X.

Iris, her Book.

I PRAY thee by the soul of her that bore thee,  
By thine own sister's spirit I implore thee,  
Deal gently with the leaves that lie before thee!

For Iris had no mother to infold her,  
Nor ever leaned upon a sister's shoulder,  
Telling the twilight thoughts that nature told her.

She had not learned the mystery of awaking  
Those chorded keys that soothe a sorrow's aching,  
Giving the dumb heart voice, that else were breaking.

Yet lived, wrought, suffered. Lo, the pictured token!  
Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,  
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken?

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies,—  
Walked simply clad, a queen of high romances,  
And talked strange tongues with angels in her trances.

Twin-souled she seemed, a twofold nature wearing,—  
Sometimes a flashing falcon in her daring,  
Then a poor mateless dove that droops despairing.

Questioning all things: Why her Lord had sent her?  
What were these torturing gifts, and wherefore lent her?  
Scornful as spirit fallen, its own tormentor.

And then all tears and anguish: Queen of Heaven,  
Sweet Saints, and Thou by mortal sorrows riven,  
Save me! oh, save me! Shall I die forgiven?

And then—Ah, God! But nay, it little matters:  
Look at the wasted seeds that autumn scatters,  
The myriad germs that Nature shapes and shatters!

If she had—Well! She longed, and knew not wherefore.  
Had the world nothing she might live to care for?  
No second self to say her evening prayer for?

She knew the marble shapes that set men dreaming,  
Yet with her shoulders bare and tresses streaming  
Showed not unlovely to her simple seeming.

Vain? Let it be so! Nature was her teacher.  
What if a lonely and unsistered creature  
Loved her own harmless gift of pleasing feature,

Saying, unsaddened,—This shall soon be faded.  
And double-hued the shining tresses braided,  
And all the sunlight of the morning shaded ?

This her poor book is full of saddest follies,  
Of tearful smiles and laughing melancholies,  
With summer roses twined and wintry hollies.

In the strange crossing of uncertain chances,  
Somewhere, beneath some maiden's tear-dimmed glances  
May fall her little book of dreams and fancies.

Sweet sister ! Iris, who shall never name thee,  
Trembling for fear her open heart may shame thee,  
Speaks from this vision-haunted page to claim thee.

Spare her, I pray thee ! If the maid is sleeping,  
Peace with her ! she has had her hour of weeping.  
No more ! She leaves her memory in thy keeping.

These verses were written in the first leaves of the locked volume. As I turned the pages, I hesitated for a moment. Is it quite fair to take advantage of a generous, trusting impulse to read the unsunned depths of a young girl's nature, which I can look through, as the balloon-voyagers tell us they see from their hanging-baskets through the translucent waters which the keenest eye of such as sail over them in ships might strive to pierce in vain ? Why has the child trusted *me* with such artless confessions,—self-revelations, which might be whispered by trembling lips, under the veil of twilight, in sacred confessionals, but which I cannot look at in the light of day without a feeling of wronging a sacred confidence ?

To all this the answer seemed plain enough after a little thought. She did not know how fearfully she had disclosed herself ; she was too profoundly innocent. Her soul was no more ashamed than the fair shapes that walked in Eden without a thought of over-liberal loveliness. Having nobody to tell her story to,—having, as she said in her verses, no musical instrument to laugh and cry with her,—nothing, in short, but the language of pen and pencil,—all the veinings of her nature were impressed on these pages, as those of a fresh leaf are transferred to the blank leaves which enclose it. It was the same thing which I remember seeing beautifully shown in a child of some four or five years we had one day at our boarding-house. This child was a deaf mute. But its soul had the inner sense that answers to hearing, and the shaping capacity which through natural organs realizes itself in words. Only it had to talk with its face alone ; and such speaking eyes, such rapid alternations of feeling and shifting expressions of thought as flitted over its face, I have never seen in any other human countenance.

I wonder if something of spiritual *transparency* is not typified in the golden-*blonde* organization. There are a great many little creatures,—many small fishes, for instance,—which are literally transparent, with the exception of some of the internal organs. The heart can be seen beating as if in a case of clouded crystal. The central nervous column with its sheath runs as a dark stripe through the whole length of the diaphanous muscles of the body. Other little creatures are so darkened with pigment that we can see only their surface. Conspirators and poisoners are painted with black, beady eyes and swarthy hue; Judas, in Leonardo's picture, is the model of them all.

However this may be, I should say there never had been a book like this of *Iris*,—so full of the heart's silent language, so transparent that the heart itself could be seen beating through it. I should say there never could have been such a book, but for one recollection, which is not peculiar to myself, but is shared by a certain number of my former townsmen. If you think I overcolour this matter of the young girl's book, hear this, which there are others, as I just said, besides myself, will tell you is strictly true.

#### THE BOOK OF THE THREE MAIDEN SISTERS.

In the town called Cantabridge, now a city, water-veined and gas windpiped, in the street running down to the Bridge, beyond which dwelt Sally, told of in a book of a friend of mine, was of old a house inhabited by three maidens. They left no near kinsfolk, I believe; if they did, I have no ill to speak of them; for they lived and died in all good report and maidenly credit. The house they lived in was of the small gambrel-roofed cottage pattern, after the shape of Esquires' houses, but after the size of the dwellings of handicraftsmen. The lower story was fitted up as a shop. Specially was it provided with one of those half-doors now so rarely met with, which are to whole doors as spencers worn by old folk are to coats. They speak of limited commerce united with a social or observing disposition on the part of the shopkeeper,—allowing, as they do, talk with passers-by, yet keeping off such as have not the excuse of business to cross the threshold. On the door-posts, at either side, above the half-door, hung certain perennial articles of merchandise, of which my memory still has hanging among its faded photographs, a kind of netted scarf and some pairs of thick woollen stockings. More articles, but not very many, were stored inside; and there was one drawer, containing children's books, out of which I once was treated to a minute quarto ornamented with handsome cuts. This was the only purchase I ever *knew* to be made at the shop kept by the three

maiden ladies, though it is probable there were others. So long as I remember the shop, the same scarf and, I should say, the same stockings hung on the door-posts.—[You think I am exaggerating again, and that shopkeepers would not keep the same article exposed for years. Come to me, the Professor, and I will take you in five minutes to a shop in this city where I will show you an article hanging now in the very place where more than *thirty years ago* I myself inquired the price of it of the present head of the establishment.]

The three maidens were of comely presence, and one of them had had claims to be considered a Beauty. When I saw them in the old meeting-house on Sundays, as they rustled in through the aisles in silks and satins, not gay, but more than decent, as I remember them, I thought of My Lady Bountiful in the history of "Little King Pippin," and of the Madam Blaize of Goldsmith (who, by the way, must have taken the hint of it from a pleasant poem, "Monsieur de la Palisse," attributed to De la Monnoye, in the collection of French songs before me).<sup>\*</sup> There was some story of an old romance in which the Beauty had played her part. Perhaps they all had had lovers; for, as I said, they were shapely and seemly personages, as I remember them; but their lives were out of the flower and in the berry at the time of my first recollections.

One after another they all three dropped away, objects of kindly attention to the good people round, leaving little or almost nothing, and nobody to inherit it. Not absolutely nothing, of course. There must have been a few old dresses,—perhaps some bits of furniture, a Bible, and the spectacles the good old souls read it through, and little keepsakes, such as make us cry to look at, when we find them in old drawers;—such relics there must have been. But there was more. There was a manuscript of some hundred pages, closely written, in which the poor things had chronicled for many years the incidents of their daily life. After their death it was passed round somewhat freely, and fell into my hands. How I have cried and laughed and coloured over it! There was nothing in it to be ashamed of, perhaps there was nothing in it to laugh at, but such a picture of the mode of being of poor simple good old women I do believe was never drawn before. And there were all the smallest incidents recorded, such as do really make up humble life, but which die out of all mere literary memoirs, as the houses where the Egyptians or the Athenians lived crumble and leave only their temples standing. I know, for instance, that on a given day of a certain year, a kindly woman, herself a poor widow, now, I trust, not without special mercies in

<sup>\*</sup> Vide Bartlett's "Familiar Quotations."

heaven for her good deeds,—for I read her name on a proper tablet in the churchyard a week ago,—sent a fractional pudding from her own table to the Maiden Sisters, who, I fear, from the warmth and detail of their description, were fasting, or at least on short allowance, about that time. I know who sent then the segment of melon, which in her riotous fancy one of them compared to those huge barges to which we give the ungracious name of mud-scows. But why should I illustrate further what it seems almost a breach of confidence to speak of? Some kind friend, who could challenge a nearer interest than the curious strangers into whose hands the book might fall, at last claimed it, and I was glad that it should be henceforth sealed to common eyes. I learned from it that every good and, alas ! every evil act we do, may slumber unforgotten even in some earthly record. I got a new lesson in that humanity which our sharp race finds it so hard to learn. The poor widow, fighting hard to feed and clothe and educate her children, had not forgotten the poorer ancient maidens. I remembered it the other day, as I stood by her place of rest, and I felt sure that it was remembered elsewhere. I know there are prettier words than *pudding*, but I can't help it,—the pudding went upon the record, I feel sure, with the mite which was cast into the treasury by that other poor widow whose deed the world shall remember for ever, and with the coats and garments which the good women cried over, when Tabitha, called by interpretation Dorcas, lay dead in the upper chamber, with her charitable needlework strewed around her.

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—Such was the Book of the Maiden Sisters. You will believe me more readily now when I tell you that I found the soul of Iris in the one that lay open before me. Sometimes it was a poem that held it, sometimes a drawing,—angel, arabesque, caricature, or a mere hieroglyphic symbol of which I could make nothing. A rag of cloud on one page, as I remember, with a streak of red zigzagging out of it across the paper as naturally as a crack runs through a China bowl. On the next page a dead bird,—some little favourite, I suppose ; for it was worked out with a special love, and I saw on the leaf that sign with which once or twice in my life I have had a letter sealed,—a round spot where the paper is slightly corrugated, and, if there is writing there, the letters are somewhat faint and blurred. Most of the pages were surrounded with emblematic traceries. It was strange to me at first to see how often she introduced those homelier wild-flowers which we call *weeds*,—for it seemed there was none of them too humble for her to love, and none too little cared for by nature to be without its beauty for her



water on her forehead. She started and looked round. 'I have been in a dream,' she said; 'I feel as if all my strength were in this arm; give me your hand!' She took my right hand in her left, which looked soft and white enough, but—Good Heaven! I believe she will crack my bones! All the nervous power in her body] must have flashed through those muscles; as when a crazy lady snaps her iron window-bars;—she who could hardly glove herself when in her common health. Iris turned pale, and the tears came to her eyes;—she saw she had given pain. Then she trembled, and might have fallen but for me;—the poor little soul had been in one of those trances that belong to the spiritual pathology of higher natures, mostly those of women.

To come back to this wondrous book of Iris. Two pages faced each other which I took for symbolical expressions of two states of mind. On the left hand, a bright blue sky washed over the page, specked with a single bird. No trace of earth, but still the winged creature seemed to be soaring upward and upward. Facing it, one of those black dungeons such as Piranesi alone of all men has pictured. I am sure she must have seen those awful prisons of his, out of which the Opium-Eater got his nightmare vision, described by another as "cemeteries of departed greatness, where monstrous and forbidden things are crawling and twining their slimy convolutions among mouldering bones, broken sculpture, and mutilated inscriptions." Such a black dungeon faced the page that held the blue sky and the single bird; at the bottom of it something was coiled,—what, and whether meant for dead or alive, my eyes could not make out.

I told you the young girl's soul was in this book. As I turned over the last leaves I could not help starting. There were all sorts of faces among the arabesques which laughed and scowled in the borders that ran round the pages. They had mostly the outline of childish or womanly or manly beauty, without very distinct individuality. But at last it seemed to me that some of them were taking on a look not wholly unfamiliar to me; there were features that did not seem new. Can it be so? Was there ever such innocence in a creature so full of life? She tells her heart's secrets as a three-years-old child betrays itself without need of being questioned! This was no common miss, such as are turned out in scores from the young-lady-factories; with parchments warranting them accomplished and virtuous,—in case anybody should question the fact. I began to understand her;—and what is so charming as to read the secret of a real *femme incomprise*?—for such there are, though they are not the ones who think themselves uncomprehended women.

Poets are never young, in one sense. Their delicate ear hears the far-off whispers of eternity, which coarser souls must travel

towards for scores of years before their dull sense is touched by them. A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience. I have frequently seen children, long exercised by pain and exhaustion, whose features had a strange look of advanced age. Too often one meets such in our charitable institutions. Their faces are saddened and wrinkled, as if their few summers were threescore years and ten.

And so, many youthful poets have written as if their hearts were old before their time; their pensive morning twilight has been as cool and saddening as that of evening in more common lives. The profound melancholy of those lines of Shelley,—

“ I could lie down like a tired child  
And weep away the life of care  
Which I have born and yet must bear,”

came from a heart, as he says, “too soon grown old,”—at *twenty-six years*, as dull people count time, even when they talk of poets.

I know enough to be prepared for an exceptional nature,—only this gift of the hand in rendering every thought in form and colour, as well as in words, gives a richness to this young girl's alphabet of feeling and imagery that takes me by surprise. And then besides, and most of all, I am puzzled at her sudden and seemingly easy confidence in me. Perhaps I owe it to my — Well, no matter! How one must love the editor who first calls him the *venerable* So-and-So!

——I locked the book and sighed as I laid it down. The world is always ready to receive talent with open arms. Very often it does not know what to do with genius. Talent is a docile creature. It bows its head meekly while the world slips the collar over it. It backs into the shafts like a lamb. It draws its load cheerfully, and is patient of the bit and of the whip. But genius is always impatient of its harness; its wild blood makes it hard to train.

Talent seems, at first, in one sense, higher than genius,—namely, that it is more uniformly and absolutely submitted to the will, and therefore more distinctly human in its character. Genius, on the other hand, is much more like those instincts which govern the admirable movements of the lower creatures, and therefore seems to have something of the lower or animal character. A goose flies by a chart which the Royal Geographical Society could not mend. A poet, like the goose, sails without visible landmarks to unexplored regions of truth, which philosophy has yet to lay down on its atlas. The philosopher gets his track by observation; the poet trusts to his inner sense, and makes the straighter and swifter line.

And yet, to look at it in another light, is not even the lowest

instinct more truly divine than any voluntary human act done by the suggestion of reason? What is a bee's architecture but an *unobstructed* divine thought?—what is a builder's approximate rule but an obstructed thought of the Creator, a mutilated and imperfect copy of some absolute rule Divine Wisdom has established, transmitted through a human soul as an image through clouded glass?

Talent is a very common family trait; genius belongs rather to individuals;—just as you find one giant or one dwarf in a family, but rarely a whole brood of either. Talent is often to be envied, and genius very commonly to be pitied. It stands twice the chance of the other of dying in a hospital, in jail, in debt, in bad repute. It is a perpetual insult to mediocrity; its every word is a trespass against somebody's vested ideas,—blasphemy against somebody's *O'm*, or intangible private truth.

—What is the use of my weighing out antitheses in this way, like a rhetorical grocer?—You know twenty men of talent, who are making their way in the world; you may, perhaps, know one man of genius, and very likely do not want to know any more. For a divine instinct, such as drives the goose southward and the poet heavenward, is a hard thing to manage, and proves too strong for many whom it possesses. It must have been a terrible thing to have a friend like Chatterton or Burns. And here is a being who certainly has more than talent, at once poet and artist in tendency, if not yet fairly developed,—a woman, too;—and genius grafted on womanhood is like to overgrow it and break its stem, as you may see a grafted fruit-tree spreading over the stock which cannot keep pace with its evolution.

I think now you know something of this young person. She wants nothing but an atmosphere to expand in. Now and then one meets with a nature for which our hard, practical, New England life is obviously utterly incompetent. It comes up, as a Southern seed, dropped by accident in one of our gardens, finds itself trying to grow and blow into flower among the homely roots and the hardy shrubs that surround it. There is no question that certain persons who are born among us find themselves many degrees too far north. Tropical by organization, they cannot fight for life with our eastern and north-western breezes without losing the colour and fragrance into which their lives would have blossomed in the latitude of myrtles and oranges. Strange effects are produced by suffering any living thing to be developed under conditions such as Nature had not intended for it. A French physiologist confined some tadpoles under water in the dark. Removed from the natural stimulus of light, they did not develop legs and

arms at the proper period of their growth, and so become frogs; they swelled and spread into gigantic tadpoles. I have seen a hundred colossal *human* tadpoles,—overgrown *larvæ* or embryos; nay, I am afraid we Protestants should look on a considerable proportion of the Holy Father's one hundred and thirty-nine millions as spiritual *larvæ*, sculling about in the dark by the aid of their caudal extremities, instead of standing on their legs, and breathing by gills, instead of taking the free air of heaven into the lungs made to receive it. Of course *we* never try to keep young souls in the tadpole state, for fear they should get a pair or two of legs by-and-by and jump out of the pool where they have been bred and fed! Never! Never. Never?

Now to go back to our plant. You may know that, for the earlier stages of development of almost any vegetable, you only want air, water, light, and warmth. But by-and-by, if it is to have special complex principles as a part of its organization, they must be supplied by the soil;—your pears will crack, if the root of the tree gets no iron,—your asparagus bed wants salt as much as you do. Just at the period of adolescence, the mind often suddenly begins to come into flower and to set its fruit. Then it is that many young natures, having exhausted the spiritual soil round them of all it contains of the elements they demand, wither away, undeveloped and uncoloured, unless they are transplanted.

Pray for these dear young souls! This is the second *natural* birth; for I do not speak of those peculiar religious experiences which form the point of transition in many lives between the consciousness of a general relation to the Divine nature and a special personal relation. The litany should count a prayer for them in the list of its supplications; masses should be said for them as for souls in purgatory; all good Christians should remember them as they remember those in peril through travel or sickness or in warfare.

I would transport this child to Rome at once, if I had my will. She should ripen under an Italian sun. She should walk under the frescoed vaults of palaces, until her colours deepened to those of Venetian beauties, and her forms were perfected into rivalry with the Greek marbles, and the east wind was out of her soul. Has she not exhausted this lean soil of the elements her growing nature requires?

I do not know. The magnolia grows and comes into full flower on Cape Ann, many degrees out of its proper region. I was riding once along that delicious road between the hills and the sea, when we passed a thicket where there seemed to be a chance of finding it. In five minutes I had fallen on the trees in full blossom, and filled my arms with the sweet, resplendent

flowers. I could not believe I was in our cold, northern Essex, which, in the dreary season when I pass its slate-coloured, unpainted farmhouses, and huge, square, windy, 'squire-built "mansions," looks as brown and unvegetating as an old rug with its patterns all trodden out and the coloured fringe worn from all its border.

If the magnolia can bloom in northern New England, why should not a poet or a painter come to his full growth here just as well? Yes, but if the gorgeous tree-flower is rare, and only as if by a freak of Nature springs up in a single spot among the beeches and alders, is there not as much reason to think the perfumed flower of imaginative genius will find it hard to be born and harder to spread its leaves in the clear, cold atmosphere of our ultra-temperate zone of humanity?

Take the poet. On the one hand, I believe that a person with the poetical faculty finds material everywhere. The grandest objects of sense and thought are common to all climates and civilizations. The sky, the woods, the waters, the storms, life, death, love, the hope and vision of eternity,—these are images that write themselves in poetry in every soul which has anything of the divine gift.

On the other hand, there is such a thing as a lean, impoverished life, in distinction from a rich and suggestive one. Which our common New England life might be considered, I will not decide. But there are some things I think the poet misses in our western Eden. I trust it is not unpatriotic to mention them in this point of view, as they come before us in so many other aspects.

There is no sufficient flavour of humanity in the soil out of which we grow. At Cantabridge, near the sea, I have once or twice picked up an Indian arrowhead in a fresh furrow. At Canoe Meadow, in the Berkshire Mountains, I have found Indian arrowheads. So everywhere Indian arrowheads. Whether a hundred or a thousand years old, who knows? who cares? There is no history to the red race,—there is hardly an individual in it ;—a few instincts on legs and holding a tomahawk,—there is the Indian of all time. The story of one red ant is the story of all red ants. So, the poet, in trying to wing his way back through the life that has kindled, flitted, and faded along our watercourses and on our southern hillsides for unknown generations, finds nothing to breathe or fly in ; he meets—

"A vast vacuity ! all unawares,  
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb down he drops  
Ten thousand fathoms deep."

But think of the Old World,—that part of it which is the seat of ancient civilization ! The stakes of the Britons' stockades

are still standing in the bed of the Thames. The ploughman turns up an old Saxon's bones, and beneath them is a tessellated pavement of the time of the Cæsars. In Italy, the works of mediæval Art seem to be of yesterday,—Rome, under her kings, is but an intruding new-comer, as we contemplate her in the shadow of the Cyclopean walls of Fiesole or Volterra. It makes a man human to live on these old humanized soils. He cannot help marching in step with his kind in the rear of such a procession. They say a dead man's hand cures swellings, if laid on them. There is nothing like the dead cold hand of the Past to take down our tumid egotism and lead us into the solemn flow of the life of our race. Rousseau came out of one of his sad self-torturing fits as he cast his eye on the arches of the old Roman aqueduct, the Pont du Gard.

I am far from denying that there is an attraction in a thriving railroad village. The new "depôt," the smartly-painted pine-houses, the spacious brick hotel, the white meeting-house, and the row of youthful and leggy trees before it, *are* exhilarating. They speak of progress, and the time when there shall be a city, with a His Honour the Mayor, in the place of their trim but transient architectural growths. Pardon me, if I prefer the pyramids. They seem to me crystals formed from a stronger solution of humanity than the steeple of the new meeting-house. I may be wrong, but the Tiber has a voice for me, as it whispers to the piers of the Pons Ælius, even more full of meaning than my well-beloved Charles eddying round the piles of West Boston Bridge.

Then, again, we Yankees are a kind of gipsies,—a mechanical and migratory race. A poet wants a home. He can dispense with an apple-parer and a reaping-machine. I feel this more for others than for myself, for the home of my birth and childhood has been as yet exempted from the change which has invaded almost everything around it.

——Pardon me a short digression. To what small things our memory and our affections attach themselves! I remember, when I was a child, that one of the girls planted some Star-of-Bethlehem bulbs in the southwest corner of our front-yard. Well, I left the paternal roof and wandered in other lands, and learned to think in the words of strange people. But after many years, as I looked on the little front-yard again, it occurred to me that there used to be some Stars-of-Bethlehem in the southwest corner. The grass was tall there, and the blade of the plant is very much like grass, only thicker and glossier. Even as Tully parted the briars and brambles when he hunted for the sphere-containing cylinder that marked the grave of Archimedes, so did I comb the grass with my fingers for my monumental memorial-flower. Nature had stored my keepsake tenderly in

her bosom ; the glossy, faintly-streaked blades were there ; they are there still, though they never flower, darkened as they are by the shade of the elms and rooted in the matted turf.

Our hearts are held down to our homes by innumerable fibres, trivial as that I have just recalled ; but Gulliver was fixed to the soil, you remember, by pinning his head a hair at a time. Even a stone with a whitish band crossing it, belonging to the pavement of the back-yard, insisted on becoming one of the talismans of memory. This intussusception of the ideas of inanimate objects, and their faithful storing away among the sentiments, are curiously prefigured in the material structure of the thinking centre itself. In the very core of the brain, in the part where Des Cartes placed the soul, is a small mineral deposit, consisting, as I have seen it in the microscope, of grape-like masses of crystalline matter.

But the plants that come up every year in the same place like the Stars-of-Bethlehem, of all the lesser objects, give me the liveliest home-feeling. Close to our ancient gambrel-roofed house is the dwelling of pleasant old Neighbour Walrus. I remember the sweet honeysuckle that I saw in flower against the wall of his house a few months ago, as long as I remember the sky and stars. That clump of peonies, butting their purple heads through the soil every spring in just the same circle, and by-and-by unpacking their hard balls of buds in flowers big enough to make a double handful of leaves, has come up in just that place, Neighbour Walrus tells me, for more years than I have passed on this planet. It is a rare privilege in our nomadic state to find the home of one's childhood and its immediate neighbourhood thus unchanged. Many born poets, I am afraid, flower poorly in song, or not at all, because they have been too often transplanted.

Then a good many of our race are very hard and unimaginative ;—their voices have nothing caressing ; their movements are as of machinery without elasticity or oil. I wish it were fair to print a letter a young girl about the age of our Iris, wrote a short time since. " I am \*\*\* \*\*\*, " she says, and tells her whole name outright. Ah ! said I, when I read that first frank declaration, you are one of the right sort. She was. A winged creature among close-clipped barn-door fowl. How tired the poor girl was of the dull life about her,—the old woman's " skeleton hand " at the opposite window, drawing her curtains, " Ma'am ——— *shooing* away the hens,—the vacuous country eyes staring at her as only country eyes can stare,—a routine of mechanical duties, and the soul's half-articulated cry for sympathy, without an answer ! Yes,—pray for her, and for all such ! Faith often cures their longings ; but it is so hard to



give a soul to heaven that has not first been trained in the fullest and sweetest human affections ! Too often they fling their hearts away on unworthy objects. Too often they pine in a secret discontent, which spreads its leaden cloud over the morning of their youth. The immeasurable distance between one of these delicate natures and the average youths among whom is like to be her only choice makes one's heart ache. How many women are born too finely organized in sense and soul for the highway they must walk with feet unshod ! Life is adjusted to the wants of the stronger sex. There are plenty of torrents to be crossed in its journey ; but their stepping-stones are measured by the stride of man, and not of woman.

Women are more subject than men to *atrophy of the heart*. So says the great medical authority, Laennec. Incurable cases of this kind used to find their hospitals in convents.—We have the disease in New England, but not the hospitals. I don't like to think of it. I will not believe our young Iris is going to die out in this way. Providence will find her some great happiness, or affliction, or duty,—and which would be best for her, I cannot tell. One thing is sure : the interest she takes in her little neighbour is getting to be more engrossing than ever. Something is the matter with him, and she knows it, and I think worries herself about it.

I wonder sometimes how so fragile and distorted a frame has kept the fiery spirit that inhabits it so long its tenant. He accounts for it in his own way.

The air of the Old World is good for nothing, he said, one day. Used up, sir,—breathed over and over again. You must come to this side, sir, for an atmosphere fit to breathe now-a-days. Did not worthy Mr. Higginson say that a breath of New England's air is better than a sup of Old England's ale ? I ought to have died when I was a boy, sir ; but I couldn't die in this Boston air, and I think I shall have to go to New York one of these days, when it's time for me to drop this bundle,—or to New Orleans, where they have the yellow fever,—or to Philadelphia, where they have so many doctors.

This was some time ago ; but of late he has seemed, as I have before said, to be ailing. An experienced eye, such as I think I may call mine, can tell commonly whether a man is going to die, or not, long before he or his friends are alarmed about him. I don't like it.

Iris has told me that the Scottish gift of second-sight runs in her family, and that she is afraid she has it. Those who are so endowed look upon a well man and see a shroud wrapt about him. According to the degree to which it covers him, his death will be near or more remote. It is an awful faculty ; but science gives one too much like it. Luckily for our friends, most of us



who have the scientific second-sight, school ourselves not to betray our knowledge by word or look.

Day by day, as the Little Gentleman comes to the table, it seems to me that the shadow of some approaching change falls darker and darker over his countenance. Nature is struggling with something, and I am afraid she is under in the wrestling-match. You do not care much, perhaps, for my particular conjectures as to the nature of his difficulty. I should say, however, from the sudden flushes to which he is subject, and certain other marks which, as an expert, I know how to interpret, that his heart was in trouble; but then he presses his hand to the *right* side, as if there were the centre of his uneasiness.

When I say difficulty about the heart, I do not mean any of those sentimental maladies of that organ which figure more largely in romances than on the returns which furnish our Bills of Mortality. I mean some actual change in the organ itself, which may carry him off by slow and painful degrees, or strike him down with one huge pang and only time for a single shriek,—as when the shot broke through the brave Captain Nolan's breast, at the head of the Light Brigade at Balaklava, and with a loud cry he dropped dead from his saddle.

I thought it only fair to say something of what I apprehended to some who were entitled to be warned. The landlady's face fell when I mentioned my fears.

Poor man! she said. And will leave the best room empty! Hasn't he got any sisters or nieces or anybody to see to his things, if he should be took away? Such a sight of cases, full of everything! Never thought of his failin' so suddin. A complication of diseases, she expected. Liver-complaint one of 'em?

After this involuntary expression of the too natural selfish feelings (which we must not judge very harshly, unless we happen to be poor widows ourselves, with children to keep filled, covered, and taught,—rents high,—beef eighteen to twenty cents per pound)—after this first squeak of selfishness, followed by a brief movement of curiosity, so invariable in mature females, as to the nature of the complaint which threatens the life of a friend or any person who may happen to be mentioned as ill,—the worthy soul's better feelings struggled up to the surface, and she grieved for the doomed invalid, until a tear or two came forth and found their way down a channel worn for them since the early days of her widowhood.

Oh, this dreadful, dreadful business of being the prophet of evil! Of all the trials which those who take charge of others' health and lives have to undergo, this is the most painful. It is all so plain to the practised eye!—and there is the poor wife, the doting mother, who has never suspected anything, or at least has clung always to the hope which you

are just going to wrench away from her! I must tell Iris that I think her poor friend is in a precarious state. She seems nearer to him than anybody.

I did tell her. Whatever emotion it produced, she kept a still face, except, perhaps, a little trembling of the lip. Could I be certain that there was any mortal complaint? Why, no, I could not be certain; but it looked alarming to me. He shall have some of my life, she said.

I suppose this to have been a fancy of hers, of a kind of magnetic power she could give out;—at any rate, I cannot help thinking she *wills* her strength away from herself, for she has lost vigour and colour from that day. I have sometimes thought he gained the force she lost; but this may have been a whim, very probably.

One day she came suddenly to me, looking deadly pale. Her lips moved, as if she were speaking; but I could not at first hear a word. Her hair looked strange, as if lifting itself, and her eyes were full of wild light. She sank upon a chair, and I thought was falling into one of her trances. Something had frozen her blood with fear; I thought, from what she said, half audibly, that she believed she had seen a shrouded figure.

That night, at about eleven o'clock, I was sent for to see the Little Gentleman, who was taken suddenly ill. Bridget, the servant, went before me with a light. The doors were both unfastened, and I found myself ushered, without hindrance into the dim light of the mysterious apartment I had so longed to enter.

I found these stanzas in the young girl's book, among many others. I give them as characterizing the tone of her sadder moments.

#### UNDER THE VIOLETS.

HER hands are cold; her face is white  
No more her pulses come and go;  
Her eyes are shut to life and light;—  
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,  
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,  
To plead for tears with alien eyes;  
A slender cross of wood alone  
Shall say that here a maiden lies  
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And grey old trees of hugest limb  
Shall wheel their circling shadows round  
To make the scorching sunlight dim  
That drinks the greenness from the ground,  
And drops their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,  
 And through their leaves the robins call,  
 And, ripening in the autumn sun,  
 The acorns and the chestnuts fall,  
 Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing  
 Its matins from the branches high,  
 And every minstrel-voice of spring,  
 That trills beneath the April sky,  
 Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,  
 Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,  
 Her little mourners, clad in black,  
 The crickets, sliding through the grass,  
 Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees  
 Shall find the prison where she lies  
 And bear the buried dust they seize  
 In leaves and blossoms to the skies.  
 So may the soul that warmed it rise !

If any, born of kindlier blood,  
 Should ask, What maiden lies below?  
 Say only this : A tender bud,  
 That tried to blossom in the snow,  
 Lies withered where the violets blow.

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## XI.

**Y**OU will know, perhaps, in the course of half an hour's reading, what has been haunting my hours of sleep and waking for months. I cannot tell, of course, whether you are a nervous person or not. If, however, you are such a person,—if it is late at night,—if all the rest of the household have gone off to bed,—if the wind is shaking your windows as if a human hand were rattling the sashes,—if your candle or lamp is low and will soon burn out,—let me advise you to take up some good quiet sleepy volume, or attack the "Critical Notices" of the last Quarterly, and leave this to be read by daylight, with cheerful voices round, and people near by who would hear you if you slid from your chair and came down in a lump on the floor.

I do not say that your heart will beat as mine did, I am willing to confess, when I entered the dim chamber. Did I not tell you that I was sensitive and imaginative, and that I had lain awake with thinking what were the strange movements and sounds which I heard late at night in my little neighbour's apartment? It had come to that pass that I was truly unable

to separate what I had really heard from what I had dreamed in those nightmares to which I have been subject, as before mentioned. So, when I walked into the room, and Bridget, turning back, closed the door and left me alone with its tenant, I do believe you could have grated a nutmeg on my skin, such a "goose-flesh" shiver ran over it. It was not fear, but what I call nervousness,—unreasoning, but irresistible; as when, for instance, one looking at the sun going down says, "I will count fifty before it disappears"; and as he goes on and it becomes doubtful whether he will reach the number, he gets strangely flurried, and his imagination pictures life and death and heaven and hell as the issues depending on the completion or non-completion of the fifty he is counting. Extreme curiosity will excite some people as much as fear, or what resembles fear, acts on some other less impressible natures.

I may find myself in the midst of strange facts in this little conjurer's room. Or, again, there may be nothing in this poor invalid's chamber but some old furniture, such as they say came over in the Mayflower. All this is just what I mean to find out while I am looking at the Little Gentleman, who has suddenly become my patient. The simplest things turn out to be unfathomable mysteries; the most mysterious appearances prove to be the most commonplace objects in disguise.

I wonder whether the boys that live in Roxbury and Dorchester are ever moved to tears or filled with silent awe as they look upon the rocks and fragments of "puddingstone" abounding in those localities. I have my suspicions that those boys "heave a stone" or "fire a brickbat," composed of the conglomerate just mentioned, without any more tearful or philosophical contemplations than boys of less favoured regions expend on the same performance. Yet a lump of puddingstone is a thing to look at, to think about, to study over, to dream upon, to go crazy with, to beat one's brains out against. Look at that pebble in it. From what cliff was it broken? On what beach rolled by the waves of what ocean? How and *when* imbedded in soft ooze, which itself became stone, and by-and-by was lifted into bald summits and steep cliffs, such as you may see on Meeting-house-Hill any day—yes, and mark the scratches on their faces left when the boulder-carrying glaciers planed the surface of the continent with such rough tools that the storms have not worn the marks out of it with all the polishing of ever so many thousand years?

Or as you pass a roadside ditch or pool in spring-time, take from it any bit of stick or straw which has lain undisturbed for a time. Some little worm-shaped masses of clear jelly containing specks are fastened to the stick; eggs of a small snail-like shell-fish. One of these specks magnified proves to be a

crystalline sphere with an opaque mass in its centre. And while you are looking, the opaque mass begins to stir, and by-and-by slowly to turn upon its axis like a forming planet,—life beginning in the microcosm, as in the great worlds of the firmament, with the revolution that turns the surface in ceaseless round to the source of life and light.

A pebble and the spawn of a mollusk! Before you have solved their mysteries, this earth where you first saw them may be a vitrified slag, or a vapour diffused through the planetary spaces. Mysteries are common enough, at any rate, whatever the boys in Roxbury and Dorchester think of “brickbats” and the spawn of creatures that live in roadside puddles.

But then a great many seeming mysteries are relatively perfectly plain, when we can get at them so as to turn them over. How many ghosts that “thick men’s blood with cold” prove to be shirts hung out to dry! How many mermaids have been made out of seals! How many times have horse-mackerel been taken for the sea-serpent!

—Let me take the whole matter coolly, while I see what is the matter with the patient. That is what I say to myself, as I draw a chair to the bedside. The bed is an old-fashioned, dark mahogany four-poster. It was never that which made the noise of something moving. It is too heavy to be pushed about the room. The Little Gentleman was sitting, bolstered up by pillows, with his hands clasped and their united palms resting on the back of the head, one of the three or four positions specially affected by persons whose breathing is difficult from disease of the heart or other causes.

Sit down, sir, he said, sit down! I have come to the hill Difficulty, sir, and am fighting my way up. His speech was laborious and interrupted.

Don’t talk, I said, except to answer my questions. And I proceeded to “prospect” for the marks of some local mischief, which you know is at the bottom of all these attacks, though we do not always find it. I suppose I go to work pretty much like other professional folks of my temperament. Thus:—

Wrist, if you please.—I was on his right side, but he presented his left wrist, crossing it over the other.—I begin to count, holding watch in left hand. One, two, three, four,———what a handsome hand!—wonder if that splendid stone is a carbuncle. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,———can’t see much, it is so dark, except one white object. One, two, three, four,———hang it! eighty or ninety in the minute, I guess.—Tongue, if you please. Tongue is put out. Forget to look at it, or, rather, to take any particular notice of it:—but what is that white object, with the long arm stretching up as if pointing to the sky, just as Vesalius and Spigelius and those old fellows

used to put their skeletons? I don't think anything of such objects, you know ; but what should *he* have it in his chamber for? As I had found his pulse irregular and intermittent, I took out a stethoscope, which is a pocket-spyglass for looking into people's chests with your ears, and laid it over the place where the heart beats. I missed the usual beat of the organ. How is this? I said. Where is your heart gone to? He took the stethoscope and shifted it across to the right side ; there was a displacement of the organ.—I am ill-packed, he said: there was no room for my heart in its place as it is with other men.—God help him !

It is hard to draw the line between scientific curiosity and the desire for the patient's sake to learn all the details of his condition. I must look at this patient's chest, and thump it and listen to it. For this is a case of *ectopia cordis*, my boy,—displacement of the heart ; and it isn't every day you get a chance to overhaul such an interesting malformation. And so I managed to do my duty and satisfy my curiosity at the same time. The torso was slight and deformed ; the right arm attenuated, — the left full, round, and of perfect symmetry. It had run away with the life of the other limbs,—a common trick enough of Nature's, as I told you before. If you see a man with legs withered from childhood, keep out of the way of his arms, if you have a quarrel with him. He has the strength of four limbs in two ; and if he strikes you, it is an arm-blow *plus* a kick administered from the shoulder instead of the haunch, where it should have started from.

Still examining him as a patient, I kept my eyes about me to search all parts of the chamber, and went on with the double process, as before. Heart hits as hard as a fist,—*bellows sound over mitral valves* (professional terms you need not attend to). What the deuce is that long case for? Got his witch grandmother mummied in it? And three big mahogany presses,—hey? A diabolical suspicion came over me which I had had once before,—that he might be one of our modern *alchemists*,—you understand,—make gold, you know, or *what looks like it*, sometimes with the head of a king or queen or of Liberty to embellish one side of the piece? Don't I remember hearing him shut a door and lock it once? What do you think was kept under that lock? Let's have another look at his hand, to see if there are any calluses. One can tell a man's business, if it is a handicraft, very often by just taking a look at his open hand. Ah! Four calluses at the end of the fingers of the right hand. None on those of the left. Ah, ha! What do those mean?

All this seems longer in the telling, of course, than it was in fact. While I was making these observations of the objects

around me, I was also forming my opinion as to the kind of case with which I had to deal.

There are three wicks, you know, to the lamp of a man's life : brain, blood, and breath. Press the brain a little, its light goes out, followed by both the others. Stop the heart a minute, and out go all three of the wicks. Choke the air out of the lungs, and presently the fluid ceases to supply the other centres of flame, and all is soon stagnation, cold, and darkness. The "tripod of life" a French physiologist called these three organs. It is all clear enough which leg of the tripod is going to break down here. I could tell you exactly what the difficulty is ;—which would be as intelligible and amusing as a watchmaker's description of a diseased timekeeper to a ploughman. It is enough to say, that I found just what I expected to, and that I think this attack is only the prelude of more serious consequences,—which expression means you very well know what.

And now the secrets of this life hanging on a thread must surely come out. If I have made a mystery where there was none, my suspicions will be shamed, as they have often been before. If there is anything strange, my visits will clear it up.

I sat an hour or two by the side of the Little Gentleman's bed, after giving him some henbane to quiet his brain, and some foxglove, which an imaginative French professor has called the "Opium of the Heart." Under their influence he gradually fell into an uneasy, half-waking slumber, the body fighting hard for every breath, and the mind wandering off in strange fancies and old recollections, which escaped from his lips in broken sentences.

—The last of 'em, he said, the last of 'em all, thank God! And the grave he lies in will look just as well as if he had been straight. Dig it deep, old Martin, dig it deep,—and let it be as long as other folks' graves. And mind you get the sods flat, old man,—flat as ever a straight-backed young fellow was laid under. And then, with a good tall slab at the head, and a footstone six foot away from it, it'll look just as if there was a man underneath.

A man ! Who said he was a man ? No more men of that pattern to bear *his* name ! Used to be a good-looking set enough. Where's all the manhood and womanhood gone to since his great-grandfather was the strongest man that sailed out of the town of Boston, and poor Leah there the handsomest woman in Essex, if she was a witch ?

—Give me some light, he said,—more light. I want to see the picture.

He had started either from a dream or a wandering reverie. He was not unwilling to have more light in the apartment, and presently had lighted an astral lamp that stood on a table.

He pointed to a portrait hanging against the wall. Look at her, he said,—look at her! Wasn't that a pretty neck to slip a hangman's noose over?

The portrait was of a young woman, something more than twenty years old, perhaps. There were few pictures of any merit painted in New England before the time of Smibert, and I am at a loss to know what artist could have taken this half-length, which was evidently from life. It was somewhat stiff and flat, but the grace of the figure and the sweetness of the expression reminded me of the angels of the early Florentine painters. She must have been of some consideration, for she was dressed in paduasoy and lace with hanging sleeves, and the old carved frame showed how the picture had been prized by its former owners. A proud eye she had, with all her sweetness. I think it was that which hanged her, as his strong arm hanged Minister George Burroughs; but it may have been a little mole on one cheek, which the artist had just hinted as a beauty rather than a deformity. You know, I suppose, that nursling imps addict themselves, after the fashion of young opossums, to these little excrescences. "Witchmarks" were good evidence that a young woman was one of the devil's wet-nurses; I should like to have seen you make fun of them in those days! Then she had a brooch in her bodice, that might have been taken for some devilish amulet or other; and she wore a ring upon one of her fingers, with a red stone in it, that flamed as if the painter had dipped his pencil in fire;—who knows but that it was given her by a midnight suitor fresh from that fierce element, and licensed for a season to leave his couch of flame to tempt the unsanctified hearts of earthly maidens and brand their cheeks with the print of his scorching kisses?

She and I, he said, as he looked steadfastly at the canvas, she and I are the last of 'em. She will stay, and I shall go. They never painted me, except when the boys used to make pictures of me with chalk on the board-fences. They said the doctors would want my skeleton when I was dead. You are my friend, if you are a doctor,—a'n't you?

I just gave him my hand. I had not the heart to speak.

I want to lie still, he said, after I am put to bed upon the hill yonder. Can't you have a great stone laid over me, as they did over the first settlers in the old burying-ground at Dorchester, so as to keep the wolves from digging them up? I never slept easy over the sod;—I should like to lie quiet under it. And besides, he said, in a kind of scared whisper, I don't want to have my bones stared at, as my body has been. I don't doubt I was a *remarkable case*; but, for God's sake, oh, for God's sake, don't let 'em make a show of the cage I have been shut up in and looked through the bars of for so many years!



I have heard it said that the art of healing makes men hardhearted and indifferent to human suffering. I am willing to own that there is often a professional hardness in surgeons, just as there is in theologians,—only much less in degree than in these last. It does not commonly improve the sympathies of a man to be in the habit of thrusting knives into his fellow-creatures and burning them with red-hot irons, any more than it improves them to hold the blinding white cautery of Gehenna by its cool handle and score and crisp young souls with it until they are scorched into the belief of—Transubstantiation or the Immaculate Conception. And, to say the plain truth, I think there are a good many coarse people in both callings. A delicate nature will not commonly choose a pursuit which implies the habitual infliction of suffering, so readily as some gentler office. Yet, while I am writing this paragraph, there passes by my window, on his daily errand of duty, not seeing me, though I catch a glimpse of his manly features through the oval glass of his chaise, as he rides by, a surgeon of skill and standing, so friendly, so modest, so tender-hearted in all his ways, that, if he had not approved himself at once adroit and firm, one would have said he was of too kindly a mould to be the minister of pain, even if it were saving pain.

You may be sure that some men, even among those who have chosen the task of pruning their fellow creatures, grow more and more thoughtful and truly compassionate in the midst of their cruel experience. They become less nervous, but more sympathetic. They have a truer sensibility for others' pain, the more they study pain and disease in the light of science. I have said this without claiming any special growth in humanity for myself, though I do hope I grow tenderer in my feelings as I grow older. At any rate, this was not a time in which professional habits could keep down certain instincts of older date than these.

This poor little man's appeal to my humanity against the supposed rapacity of Science, which he feared would have her "specimen," if his ghost should walk restlessly a thousand years, waiting for his bones to be laid in the dust, touched my heart. But I felt bound to speak cheerily.

—We won't die yet awhile, if we can help it, I said,—and I trust we can help it. But don't be afraid; if I live longest, I will see that your resting-place is kept sacred till the dandelions and buttercups blow over you.

He seemed to have got his wits together by this time, and to have a vague consciousness that he might have been saying more than he meant for anybody's ears. I have been talking a little wild, sir, eh? he said. There is a great buzzing in my head with those drops of yours, and I doubt if my tongue has not been a little looser than I would have it, sir. But I don't

much want to live, sir ; that's the truth of the matter ; and it does rather please me to think that fifty years from now nobody will know that the place where I lie doesn't hold as stout and straight a man as the best of 'em that stretch out as if they were proud of the room they take. You may get me well, if you can, sir, if you think it worth while to try ; but I tell you there has been no time for this many a year when the smell of fresh earth was not sweeter to me than all the flowers that grow out of it. There's no anodyne like your good clean gravel, sir. But if you can keep me about a while, and it amuses you to try, you may show your skill upon me, if you like. There is a pleasure or two that I love the daylight for, and I think the night is not far off, at best. I believe I shall sleep now ; you may leave me, and come, if you like, in the morning.

Before I passed out, I took one more glance round the apartment. The beautiful face of the portrait looked at me, as portraits often do, with a frightful kind of intelligence in its eyes. The drapery fluttered on the still outstretched arm of the tall object near the window ;—a crack of this was open, no doubt, and some breath of wind stirred the hanging folds. In my excited state, I seemed to see something ominous in that arm pointing to the heavens. I thought of the figures in the Dance of Death at Basle, and that other on the panels of the covered Bridge at Lucerne ; and it seemed to me that the grim mask who mingles with every cloud and glides over every threshold was pointing the sick man to his far home, and would soon stretch out his bony hand and lead him or drag him on the unmeasured journey towards it.

The fancy had possession of me, and I shivered again as when I first entered the chamber. The picture and the shrouded shape ; I saw only these two objects. They were enough. The house was deadly still, and the night-wind, blowing through an open window, struck me as from a field of ice, at the moment I passed into the creaking corridor. As I turned into the common passage, a white figure, holding a lamp, stood full before me. I thought at first it was one of those images made to stand in niches and hold a light in their hands. But the illusion was momentary, and my eyes speedily recovered from the shock of the bright flame and snowy drapery to see that the figure was a breathing one. It was Iris, in one of her statue-trances. She had come down, whether sleeping or waking, I knew not at first, led by an instinct that told her she was wanted,—or, possibly, having overheard and interpreted the sound of our movements,—or, it may be, having learned from the servant that there was trouble which might ask for a woman's hand. I sometimes think women have a sixth sense, which tells them that others, whom they cannot see or hear, are

in suffering. How surely we find them at the bedside of the dying ! How strongly does Nature plead for them, that we should draw our first breath in their arms, as we sigh away our last upon their faithful breasts !

With white, bare feet, her hair loosely knotted, dressed as the starlight knew her, and the morning when she rose from slumber, save that she had twisted a scarf round her long dress, she stood still as a stone before me, holding in one hand a lighted coil of wax-taper, and in the other a silver goblet. I held my own lamp close to her, as if she had been a figure of marble, and she did not stir. There was no breach of propriety then, to scare the Poor Relation with and breed scandal out of. She had been "warned in a dream," doubtless suggested by her waking knowledge and the sounds which had reached her exalted sense. There was nothing more natural than that she should have risen and girdled her waist, and lighted her taper, and found the silver goblet with "*Ex dono pupillorum*" on it, from which she had taken her milk and possets through all her childish years, and so gone blindly out to find her place at the bedside,—a Sister of Charity without the cap and rosary ; nay, unknowing whither her feet were leading her, and with wide, blank eyes seeing nothing but the vision that beckoned her along. Well, I must wake her from her slumber or trance. I called her name, but she did not heed my voice.

The devil put it into my head that I would kiss one handsome young girl before I died, and now was my chance. She never would know it, and I should carry the remembrance of it with me into the grave, and a rose perhaps grow out of my dust, as a brier did out of Lord Lovel's, in memory of that immortal moment ! Would it wake her from her trance ? and would she see me in the flush of my stolen triumph, and hate and despise me ever after ? Or should I carry off my trophy undetected, and always from that time say to myself, when I looked upon her in the glory of youth and the splendour of beauty, "My lips have touched those roses, and made their sweetness mine for ever" ? You think my cheek was flushed, perhaps, and my eyes were glittering with this midnight flash of opportunity. On the contrary, I believe I was pale, very pale, and I know that I trembled. Ah, it is the pale passions that are the fiercest,—it is the violence of the chill that gives the measure of the fever ! The fighting-boy of our school always turned white when he went out to a pitched battle with the bully of some neighbouring village ; but we knew what his bloodless cheeks meant,—the blood was all in his stout heart,—he was a slight boy, and there was not enough to redden his face and fill his heart both at once.

Perhaps it is making a good deal of a slight matter, to tell

the internal conflicts in the heart of a quiet person something more than juvenile and something less than senile, as to whether he should be guilty of an impropriety, and, if he were, whether he would get caught in his indiscretion. And yet the memory of the kiss that Margaret of Scotland gave to Alain Chartier has lasted four hundred years, and put it into the head of many an ill-favoured poet, whether Victoria or Eugénie would do as much by him, if she happened to pass him when he was asleep. And have we ever forgotten that the fresh cheek of the young John Milton tingled under the lips of some high-born Italian beauty, who, I believe, did not think to leave her card by the side of the slumbering youth, but has bequeathed the memory of her pretty deed to all coming time? The sound of a kiss is not so loud as that of a cannon, but its echo lasts a deal longer.

There is one disadvantage which the man of philosophical habits of mind suffers, as compared with the man of action. While he is taking an enlarged and rational view of the matter before him, he lets his chance slip through his fingers. Iris woke up, of her own accord, before I had made up my mind what I was going to do about it.

When I remember how charmingly she looked, I don't blame myself at all for being tempted ; but if I had been fool enough to yield to the impulse, I should certainly have been ashamed to tell of it. She did not know what to make of it, finding herself there alone, in such guise, and me staring at her. She looked down at her white robe and bare feet, and coloured,—then at the goblet she held in her hand,—then at the taper ; and at last her thoughts seemed to clear up.

—I know it all, she said. He is going to die, and I must go and sit by him. Nobody will care for him as I shall, and I have nobody else to care for.

I assured her that nothing was needed for him that night but rest, and persuaded her that the excitement of her presence could only do harm. Let him sleep, and he would very probably awake better in the morning. There was nothing to be said, for I spoke with authority ; and the young girl glided away with noiseless step and sought her own chamber.

The tremour passed away from my limbs, and the blood began to burn in my cheeks. The beautiful image which had so bewitched me faded gradually from my imagination, and I returned to the still perplexing mysteries of my little neighbour's chamber. All was still there now. No plaintive sounds, no monotonous murmurs, no shutting of windows and doors at strange hours, as if something or somebody were coming in or going out, or there was something to be hidden in those dark mahogany presses. Is there an inner apartment that I have

not seen? The way in which the house is built might admit of it. As I thought it over, I at once imagined a Bluebeard's chamber. Suppose, for instance, that the narrow bookshelves to the right are really only a masked door, such as we remember leading to the private study of one of our most distinguished townsmen, who loved to steal away from his stately library to that little silent cell. If this were lighted from above, a person or persons might pass their days there without attracting attention from the household, and wander where they pleased at night,—to Copp's-Hill burial-ground, if they liked, I said to myself, laughing, and pulling the bedclothes over my head. There is no logic in superstitious fancies any more than in dreams. A she-ghost wouldn't want an inner chamber to herself. A live woman, with a valuable soprano voice, wouldn't start off at night to sprain her ankles over the old graves of the North-End cemetery.

It is all very easy for you, middle-aged reader, sitting over this page in the broad daylight, to call me by all manner of asinine and anserine unchristian names, because I had these fancies running through my head. I don't care much for your abuse. The question is not, what it is reasonable for a man to think about, but what he actually does think about, in the dark, and when he is alone, and his whole body seems but one great nerve of hearing, and he sees the phosphorescent flashes of his own eyeballs as they turn suddenly in the direction of the last strange noise,—what he actually does think about, as he lies and recalls all the wild stories his head is full of, his fancy hinting the most alarming conjectures to account for the simplest facts about him, his common sense laughing them to scorn the next minute, but his mind still returning to them, under one shape or another, until he gets very nervous and foolish, and remembers how pleasant it used to be to have his mother come and tuck him up and go and sit within call, so that she could hear him at any minute, if he got very much scared and wanted her. Old babies that we are!

Daylight will clear up all that lamp-light has left doubtful. I longed for the morning to come, for I was more curious than ever. So, between my fancies and anticipations, I had but a poor night of it, and came down tired to the breakfast-table. My visit was not to be made until after this morning hour; there was nothing urgent, so the servant was ordered to tell me.

It was the first breakfast at which the high chair at the side of Iris had been unoccupied. You might jest as well take away that chair, said our landlady, he'll never want it again. He acts like a man that's struck with death, 'n' I don't believe he'll ever come out of his chamber till he's laid out and brought down a corpse. These good women do put things so plainly!

There were two or three words in her short remark that always sober people, and suggest silence or brief moral reflections.

—Life is dreadful uncerting, said the Poor Relation,—and pulled in her social tentacles to concentrate her thoughts on this fact of human history.

—If there was anything a fellah could do, said the young man John, so called,—a fellah 'd like the chance o' helpin' a little cripple like that. He looks as if he couldn't turn over any handier than a turtle that's laid on his back ; and I guess there a'n't many people that know how to lift better than I do. Ask him if he don't want any watchers. I don't mind settin' up any more 'n' a cat-owl. I was up all night twice last month.

[My private opinion is, that there was no small amount of punch absorbed on those two occasions, which I think I heard of at the time : but the offer is a kind one, and it isn't fair to question how he would like sitting up without the punch and the company and the songs and smoking. He means what he says, and it would be a more considerable achievement for him to sit quietly all night by a sick man than for a good many other people. I tell you this odd thing ; there are a good many persons, who, through the habit of making other folks uncomfortable, by finding fault with all their cheerful enjoyments, at last get up a kind of hostility to comfort in general, even in their own persons. The correlative to loving our neighbours as ourselves is hating ourselves as we hate our neighbours. Look at old misers ; first they starve their dependents, and then themselves. So I think it more for a lively young fellow to be ready to play nurse than for one of those useful but forlorn martyrs who have taken a spite against themselves and love to gratify it by fasting and watching.]

—The time came at last for me to make my visit. I found Iris sitting by the Little Gentleman's pillow. To my disappointment, the room was darkened. He did not like the light, and would have the shutters kept nearly closed. It was good enough for me ; what business had I to be indulging my curiosity, when I had nothing to do but to exercise such skill as I possessed for the benefit of my patient ? There was not much to be said or done in such a case ; but I spoke as encouragingly as I could, as I think we are always bound to do. He did not seem to pay any very anxious attention, but the poor girl listened as if her own life and more than her own life were depending on the words I uttered. She followed me out of the room, when I had got through my visit.

How long ? she said.

Uncertain. Any time ; to-day,—next week,—next month, I answered. One of those cases where the issue is not doubtful, but may be sudden or slow

The women of the house were kind, as women always are in trouble. But Iris pretended that nobody could spare the time as well as she, and kept her place, hour after hour, until the landlady insisted that she'd be killin' herself, if she begun at that rate, 'n' haf to give up, if she didn't want to be clean beat out in less 'n a week.

At the table we were graver than common. The high chair was set back against the wall, and a gap left between that of the young girl and her nearest neighbour's on the right. But the next morning, to our great surprise, that good-looking young Marylander had very quietly moved his own chair to the vacant place. I thought he was creeping down that way, but I was not prepared for a leap spanning such a tremendous parenthesis of boarders as this change of position included. There was no denying that the youth and maiden were a handsome pair, as they sat side by side. But whatever the young girl may have thought of her new neighbour, she never seemed for a moment to forget the poor little friend who had been taken from her side. There are women, and even girls, with whom it is of no use to talk. One might as well reason with a bee as to the form of his cell, or with an oriole as to the construction of his swinging nest, as try to stir these creatures from their own way of doing their own work. It was not a question with Iris, whether she was entitled by any special relation or by the fitness of things to play the part of a nurse. She was a wilful creature that must have her way in this matter. And it so proved that it called for much patience and long endurance to carry through the duties, say rather the kind offices, the painful pleasures, that she had chosen as her share in the household where accident had thrown her. She had that genius of ministration which is the special province of certain women, marked even among their helpful sisters by a soft, low voice, a quiet footfall, a light hand, a cheering smile, and a ready self-surrender to the objects of their care, which such trifles as their own food, sleep, or habits of any kind never presume to interfere with.

Day after day, and too often through the long watches of the night, she kept her place by the pillow. That girl will kill herself over me, sir, said the poor Little Gentleman to me, one day,—she will kill herself, sir, if you don't call in all the resources of your art to get me off as soon as may be. I shall wear her out, sir, with sitting in this close chamber and watching when she ought to be sleeping, if you leave me to the care of Nature without dosing me.

This was rather strange pleasantry, under the circumstances. But there are certain persons whose existence is so out of parallel with the larger laws in the midst of which it is moving,



that life becomes to them as death and death as life. How am I getting along? he said, another morning. He lifted his shrivelled hand, with the death's-head ring on it, and looked at it with a sad sort of complacency. By this one movement, which I have seen repeatedly of late, I know that his thoughts have gone before to another condition, and that he is, as it were, looking back on the infirmities of the body as accidents of the past. For, when he was well, one might see him often looking at the handsome hand with the flaming jewel on one of its fingers. The single well-shaped limb was the source of that pleasure which in some form or other Nature almost always grants to her least richly endowed children. Handsome hair, eyes, complexion, feature, form, hand, foot, pleasant voice, strength, grace, agility, intelligence,—how few there are that have not just enough of one at least of these gifts to show them that the good Mother, busy with her millions of children, has not quite forgotten them! But now he was thinking of that other state, where, free from all mortal impediments, the memory of his sorrowful burden should be only as that of the case he has shed to the insect whose “deep-damasked wings” beat off the golden dust of the lily-anthers, as he flutters in the ecstasy of his new life over their full-blown summer glories.

No human being can rest for any time in a state of equilibrium, where the desire to live and that to depart just balance each other. If one has a house, which he has lived and always means to live in, he pleases himself with the thought of all the conveniences it offers him, and thinks little of its wants and imperfections. But once having made up his mind to move to a better, every incommodity starts out upon him, until the very ground-plan of it seems to have changed in his mind, and his thoughts and affections, each one of them packing up its little bundle of circumstances, have quitted their several chambers and nooks and migrated to the new home, long before its apartments are ready to receive their bodily tenant. It is so with the body. Most persons have died before they expire,—died to all earthly longings, so that the last breath is only, as it were, the locking of the door of the already deserted mansion. The fact of the tranquillity with which the great majority of dying persons await this locking of those gates of life through which its airy angels have been going and coming, from the moment of the first cry, is familiar to those who have been often called upon to witness the last period of life. Almost always there is a preparation made by Nature for unearthing a soul, just as on the smaller scale there is for the removal of a milk-tooth. The roots which hold human life to earth are absorbed before it is lifted from its place. Some of the dying are weary and want rest, the idea of which is almost insepa-



rable in the universal mind from death. Some are in pain, and want to be rid of it, even though the anodyne be dropped, as in the legend, from the sword of the Death-Angel. Some are stupid, mercifully narcotized that they may go to sleep without long tossing about. And some are strong in faith and hope, so, that, as they draw near the next world, they would fain hurry toward it, as the caravan moves faster over the sands when the foremost travellers send word along the file that water is in sight. Though each little party that follows in a foot-track of its own will have it that the water to which others think they are hastening is a mirage, not the less has it been true in all ages and for human beings of every creed which recognized a future, that those who have fallen worn out by their march through the Desert have dreamed at least of a River of Life, and thought they heard its murmurs as they lay dying.

The change from the clinging to the present to the welcoming of the future comes very soon, for the most part, after all hope of life is extinguished, provided this be left in good degree to Nature, and not insolently and cruelly forced upon those who are attacked by illness, on the strength of that odious foreknowledge often imparted by science, before the white fruit whose core is ashes, and which we call *death*, has set beneath the pallid and drooping flower of sickness. There is a singular sagacity very often shown in a patient's estimate of his own vital force. His physician knows the state of his material frame well enough, perhaps,—that this or that organ is more or less impaired or disintegrated; but the patient has a sense that he can hold out so much longer,—sometimes that he must and will live for a while, though by the logic of disease he ought to die without any delay.

The Little Gentleman continued to fail, until it became plain that his remaining days were few. I told the household what to expect. There was a good deal of kind feeling expressed among the boarders, in various modes, according to their characters and style of sympathy. The landlady was urgent that he should try a certain nostrum which had saved somebody's life in just such a case. The Poor Relation wanted me to carry, as from her, a copy of "Allein's Alarm," etc. I objected to the title, reminding her that it offended people of old, so that more than twice as many of the book were sold when they changed the name to "A Sure Guide to Heaven." The good old gentleman whom I have mentioned before has come to the time of life when many old men cry easily, and forget their tears as children do. He was a worthy gentleman, he said, a very worthy gentleman, but unfortunate,—very unfortunate. Sadly deformed about the spine and the feet. Had an impression that the late Lord Byron had some malformation

of this kind. Had heerd there was something the matter with the ankle-joints of that nobleman, but he was a man of talents. This gentleman seemed to be a man of talents. Could not always agree with his statements,—though he was a little over-partial to this city, and had some free opinions; but was sorry to lose him,—and if—there was anything—he—could—— ———. In the midst of these kind expressions, the gentleman with the *diamond*, the Koh-i-noor, as we called him, asked, in a very unpleasant sort of way, how the old boy was likely to cut up,—meaning what money our friend was going to leave behind.

The young fellow John spoke up, to the effect that this was a diabolish snobby question, when a man was dying and not dead. To this the Koh-i-noor replied, by asking if the other meant to insult him. Whereunto the young man John rejoined that he had no particul'r intentions one way or t'other. The Koh-i-noor then suggested the young man's stepping out into the yard, that he, the speaker, might "slap his chops." Let 'em alone, said young Maryland, it'll soon be over, and they won't hurt each other much. So they went out.

The Koh-i-noor entertained the very common idea, that, when one quarrels with another, the simple thing to do is to *knock the man down*, and there is the end of it. Now those who have watched such encounters are aware of two things; first, that it is not so easy to knock a man down as it is to talk about it; secondly, that, if you do happen to knock a man down, there is a very good chance that he will be angry, and get up and give you a thrashing.

So the Koh-i-noor thought he would begin, as soon as they got into the yard, by knocking his man down, and with this intention swung his arm round after the fashion of rustics and those unskilled in the noble art, expecting the young fellow John to drop when his fist, having completed a quarter of a circle, should come in contact with the side of that young man's head. Unfortunately for this theory, it happens that a blow struck out straight is as much shorter, and therefore as much quicker than the rustic's swinging blow, as the radius is shorter than the quarter of a circle. The mathematical and mechanical corollary was, that the Koh-i-noor felt something hard bring up suddenly against his right eye, which something he could have sworn was a paving-stone, judging by his sensations; and as this threw his person somewhat backwards, and the young man John jerked his own head back a little, the swinging blow had nothing to stop it; and as the Jewel staggered between the hit he got and the blow he missed, he tripped and "went to grass," so far as the back-yard of our boarding-house was provided with that vegetable. It was a signal illus-

tration of that fatal mistake, so frequent in young and ardent natures with inconspicuous calves and negative pectorals, that they can settle most little quarrels on the spot by "knocking the man down."

We are in the habit of handling our faces so carefully, that a heavy blow, taking effect on that portion of the surface, produces a most unpleasant surprise, which is accompanied with odd sensations, as of seeing sparks, and a kind of electrical or ozone-like odour, half-sulphurous in character, and which has given rise to a very vulgar and profane threat sometimes heard from the lips of bullies. A person not used to pugilistic gestures, does not instantly recover from this surprise. The Koh-i-noor, exasperated by his failure, and still a little confused by the smart hit he had received, but furious, and confident of victory over a young fellow a good deal lighter than himself, made a desperate rush to bear down all before him and finish the contest at once. That is the way all angry greenhorns and incompetent persons attempt to settle matters. It doesn't do, if the other fellow is only cool, moderately quick, and has a very little science. It didn't do this time; for, as the assailant rushed in with his arms flying everywhere, like the vanes of a windmill, he ran a prominent feature of his face against a fist which was travelling in the other direction, and immediately after struck the knuckles of the young man's other fist a severe blow with the part of his person known as the *epigastrium* to one branch of science and the *bread-basket* to another. This second round closed the battle. The Koh-i-noor had got enough, which in such cases is more than as good as a feast. The young fellow asked him if he was satisfied, and held out his hand. But the other sulked, and muttered something about revenge. Jest as y' like, said the young man John. Clap a slice o' raw beefsteak on to that mouse o' yours 'n' 't'll take down the swellin' (*mouse* is a technical term for a bluish, oblong, rounded elevation occasioned by running one's forehead or eyebrow against another's knuckles). The young fellow was particularly pleased that he had had an opportunity of trying his proficiency in the art of self-defence without the gloves. The Koh-i-noor did not favour us with his company for a day or two, being confined to his chamber, *it was said*, by a *slight feverish attack*. He was chop-fallen always after this, and got negligent in his person. The impression must have been a deep one; for it was observed, that, when he came down again, his moustache and whiskers had turned visibly white—*about the roots*. In short, it disgraced him, and rendered still more conspicuous a tendency to drinking, of which he had been for some time suspected. This, and the disgust which a young lady naturally feels at hearing that her lover has been "licked by a fellah not half his size,"

induced the landlady's daughter to take that decided step which produced a change in the programme of her career I may hereafter allude to.

I never thought he would come to good, when I heard him attempting to sneer at an unoffending city so respectable as Boston. After a man begins to attack the State-House, when he gets bitter about the Frog-Pond, you may be sure there is not much left of him. Poor Edgar Poe died in the hospital soon after he got into this way of talking ; and so sure as you find an unfortunate fellow reduced to this pass, you had better begin praying for him, and stop lending him money, for he is on his last legs. Remember poor Edgar ! He is dead and gone ; but the State-House has its cupola fresh-gilded, and the Frog-Pond has got a fountain that squirts up a hundred feet into the air and glorifies that humble sheet with a fine display of provincial rainbows.

— I cannot fulfil my promise in this number. I expected to gratify your curiosity, if you have become at all interested in these puzzles, doubts, fancies, whims, or whatever you choose to call them, of mine. Next month you shall hear all about it.

— It was evening, and I was going to the sick-chamber. As I paused at the door before entering, I heard a sweet voice singing. It was not the wild melody I had sometimes heard at midnight :—no, this was the voice of Iris, and I could distinguish every word. I had seen the verses in her book ; the melody was new to me. Let me finish my page with them.

#### HYMN OF TRUST.

O LOVE Divine, that stooped to share  
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,  
On Thee we cast each earthborn care,  
We smile at pain while Thou art near !

Though long the weary way we tread,  
And sorrow crown each lingering year,  
No path we shun, no darkness dread,  
Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near.

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,  
And trembling faith is changed to fear,  
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf  
Shall softly tell us, Thou art near !

On Thee we fling our burdening woe,  
O Love Divine, for ever dear,  
Content to suffer, while we know,  
Living and dying, Thou art near !

## XII.

**A** YOUNG fellow, born of good stock, in one of the more thoroughly civilized portions of these United States of America, bred in good principles, inheriting a social position which makes him at his ease everywhere, means sufficient to educate him thoroughly without taking away the stimulus to vigorous exertion, and with a good opening in some honourable path of labour, is the finest sight our private satellite has had the opportunity of inspecting on the planet to which she belongs. In some respects it was better to be a young Greek. If we may trust the old marbles,—my friend with his arm stretched over my head, above there (in plaster of Paris), or the discobolus, whom one may see at the principal sculpture gallery of this metropolis,—those Greek young men were of supreme beauty. Their close curls, their elegantly set heads, column-like necks, straight noses, short, curled lips, firm chins, deep chests, light flanks, large muscles, small joints, were finer than any thing we ever see. It may well be questioned whether the human shape will ever present itself again in a race of such perfect symmetry. But the life of the youthful Greek was local, not planetary, like that of the young American. He had a string of legends, in place of our Gospels. He had no printed books, no newspaper, no steam caravans, no forks, no soap, none of the thousand cheap conveniences which have become matters of necessity to our modern civilization. Above all things, if he aspired to know as well as to enjoy, he found knowledge not diffused everywhere about him, so that a day's labour would buy him more wisdom than a year could master, but held in private hands, hoarded in precious manuscripts, to be sought for only as gold is sought in narrow fissures, and in the beds of brawling streams. Never, since man came into this atmosphere of oxygen and azote, was there anything like the condition of the young American of the nineteenth century. Having in possession or in prospect the best part of half a world, with all its climates and soils to choose from ; equipped with wings of fire and smoke that fly with him day and night, so that he counts his journey not in miles, but in degrees, and sees the seasons change as the wild fowl sees them in his annual flights ; with huge leviathans always ready to take him on their broad backs and push behind them with their pectoral or caudal fins the waters that seam the continent or separate the hemispheres ; heir of all old civilizations, founder of that new one which, if all the prophecies of the human heart are not lies, is to be the noblest, as it is the last ; isolated in space from

the races that are governed by dynasties whose divine rights grow out of human wrong, yet knit into the most absolute solidarity with mankind of all times and places by the one great thought he inherits as his national birthright ; free to form and express his opinions on almost every subject, and assured that he will soon acquire the last franchise which men withhold from man,—that of stating the laws of his spiritual being and the beliefs he accepts without hindrance except from clearer views of truth,—ne[seems] to want nothing for a large, wholesome, noble, beneficent life. In fact, the chief danger is that he will think the whole planet is made for him, and forget that there are some possibilities left in the *débris* of the old world civilization which deserve a certain respectful consideration at his hands.

The combing and clipping of this shaggy wild continent are in some measure done for him by those who have gone before. Society has subdivided itself enough to have a place for every form of talent. Thus, if a man show the least sign of ability as a sculptor or a painter, for instance, he finds the means of education and a demand for his services. Even a man who knows nothing but science will be provided for, if he does not think it necessary to hang about his birth-place all his days,—which is a most un-American weakness. The apron-strings of an American mother are made of India-rubber. Her boy belongs where he is wanted ; and that young Marylander of ours spoke for all our young men, when he said that his home was wherever the stars and stripes blew over his head.

And that leads me to say a few words of this young gentleman, who made that audacious movement lately which I chronicled in my last record,—jumping over the seats of I don't know how many boarders to put himself in the place which the Little Gentleman's absence had left vacant at the side of Iris. When a young man is found habitually at the side of any one given young lady,—when he lingers where she stays, and hastens when she leaves,—when his eyes follow her as she moves, and rest upon her when she is still,—when he begins to grow a little timid, he who was so bold, and a little pensive, he who was so gay, whenever accident finds them alone,—when he thinks very often of the given young lady, and names her very seldom,——

What do you say about it, my charming young expert in that sweet science in which, perhaps, a long experience is not the first of qualifications ?

—— But we don't know anything about this young man except that he is good-looking, and somewhat high-spirited, and strong-limbed, and has a generous style of nature,—all very promising, but by no means proving that he is a proper lover

for Iris, whose heart we turned inside out when we opened that sealed book of hers.

Ah, my dear young friend ! When your mamma—then, if you will believe it, a very slight young lady, with very pretty hair and figure—came and told *her* mamma that your papa had—had—asked——No, no, no ! she couldn't say it ; but her mother—oh, the depth of maternal sagacity !—guessed it all without another word !—When your mother, I say, came and told her mother she was *engaged*, and your grandmother told your grandfather, how much did they know of the intimate nature of the young gentleman to whom she had pledged her existence ? I will not be so hard as to ask how much your respected mamma knew at that time of the intimate nature of your respected papa, though, if we should compare a young girl's *man-as-she-thinks-him* with a forty-summered matron's *man-as-she-finds-him*, I have my doubts as to whether the second would be a facsimile of the first in most cases.

The idea that in this world each young person is to wait until he or she finds that precise counterpart who alone of all creation was meant for him or her, and then fall instantly in love with it, is pretty enough, only it is not Nature's way. It is not at all essential that all pairs of human beings should be, as we sometimes say of particular couples, "born for each other." Sometimes a man or a woman is made a great deal better and happier in the end for having had to conquer the faults of the one beloved, and make the fitness not found at first, by gradual assimilation. There is a class of good women who have no right to marry perfectly good men, because they have the power of saving those who would go to ruin but for the guiding providence of a good wife. I have known many such cases. It is the most momentous question a woman is ever called upon to decide—whether the faults of the man she loves are beyond remedy, and will drag her down, or whether she is competent to be his earthly redeemer, and lift him to her own level.

A person of *genius* should marry a person of *character*. Genius does not herd with genius. The musk-deer and the civet-cat are never found in company. They don't care for strange scents—they like plain animals better than perfumed ones. Nay, if you will have the kindness to notice, Nature has not gifted my lady musk-deer with the personal peculiarity by which her lord is so widely known.

Now, when genius allies itself with character, the world is very apt to think character has the best of the bargain. A brilliant woman marries a plain, manly fellow, with a simple intellectual mechanism : we have all seen such cases. The world often stares a good deal and wonders. She should have taken



that other, with a far more complex mental machinery. She might have had a watch with the philosophical compensation-balance, with the metaphysical index, which can split a second into tenths, with the musical chime which can turn every quarter of an hour into melody. She has chosen a plain one, that keeps good time, and that is all.

Let her alone! She knows what she is about. Genius has an infinitely deeper reverence for character than character can have for genius. To be sure, genius gets the world's praise, because its work is a tangible product, to be bought, or had for nothing. It bribes the common voice to praise it by presents of speeches, poems, statues, pictures, or whatever it can please with. Character evolves its best products for home consumption; but, mind you, it takes a deal more to feed a family for thirty years than to make a holiday feast for our neighbours once or twice in our lives. You talk of the fire of genius. Many a blessed woman, who dies unsung and unremembered, has given out more of the real vital heat that keeps the life in human souls, without a spark flitting through her humble chimney to tell the world about it, than would set a dozen theories smoking, or a hundred odes simmering, in the brains of so many men of genius. It is in *latent caloric*, if I may borrow a philosophical expression, that many of the noblest hearts give out the life that warms them. Cornelia's lips grow white, and her pulse hardly warms her thin fingers,—but she has melted all the ice out of the hearts of those young Gracchi, and her lost heat is in the blood of her youthful heroes. We are always valuing the soul's temperature by the thermometer of public deed or word. Yet the great sun himself, when he pours his noonday beams upon some vast hyaline boulder, rent from the eternal ice-quarries, and floating towards the tropics, never warms it a fraction above the thirty-two degrees of Fahrenheit that marked the moment when the first drop trickled down its side.

How we all like the spiriting up of a fountain, seemingly against the law that makes water everywhere slide, roll, leap, tumble headlong, to get as low as the earth will let it! That is genius. But what is this transient upward movement, which gives us the glitter and the rainbow, to that unsleeping, all-present force of gravity, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever (if the universe be eternal), the great outspread hand of God himself, forcing all things down into their places, and keeping them there? Such, in smaller proportion, is the force of character to the fitful movements of genius, as they are, or have been, linked to each other in many a household, where one name was historic, and the other—let me say the nobler—unknown, save by some faint reflected ray, borrowed from its lustrous companion.



Oftentimes, as I have lain swinging on the water, in the swell of the Chelsea ferry-boats, in that long, sharp-pointed, black cradle in which I love to let the great mother rock me, I have seen a tall ship glide by against the tide, as if drawn by some invisible tow-line, with a hundred strong arms pulling it. Her sails hung unfilled, her streamers were drooping, she had neither side-wheel nor stern-wheel; still she moved on, stately, in serene triumph, as if with her own life. But I knew that on the other side of the ship, hidden beneath the great hulk that swam so majestically, there was a little toiling steam-tug, with heart of fire and arms of iron, that was hugging it close, and dragging it bravely on; and I knew that, if the little steam-tug untwined her arms and left the tall ship, it would wallow and roll about, and drift hither and thither, and go off with the reflux tide no man knows whither. And so I have known more than one *genius*, high-decked, full-freighted, wide-sailed, gay-pennoned, that, but for the bare toiling arms, and brave, warm, beating heart of the faithful little wife, that nestled close in his shadow, and clung to him, so that no wind or wave could part them, and dragged him on against all the tide of circumstance, would soon have gone down the stream and been heard of no more. No, I am too much a lover of genius, I sometimes think, and too often get impatient with dull people, so that, in their weak talk, where nothing is taken for granted, I look forward to some future possible state of development, when a gesture passing between a beatified human soul and an archangel shall signify as much as the complete history of a planet, from the time when it curdled to the time when its sun was burned out. And yet, when a strong brain is weighed with a true heart, it seems to me like balancing a bubble against a wedge of gold.

— It takes a very *true* man to be a fitting companion for a woman of genius, but not a very great one. I am not sure that she will not embroider her ideal better on a plain ground than on one with a brilliant pattern already worked in its texture. But as the very essence of genius is truthfulness, contact with realities (which are always ideas behind shows of form or language), nothing is so contemptible as falsehood and pretence in its eyes. Now, it is not easy to find a perfectly true woman, and it is very hard to find a perfectly true man. And a woman of genius, who has the sagacity to choose such a one as her companion, shows more of the divine gift in so doing than in her finest talk or her most brilliant work of letters or of art.

I have been a good while coming at a secret, for which I wished to prepare you before telling it. I think there is a kindly feeling growing up between Iris and our young Mary-

lander. Not that I suppose there is any distinct understanding between them, but that the affinity which has drawn him from the remote corner where he sat to the side of the young girl is quietly bringing their two natures together. Just now she is all given up to another ; but when he no longer calls upon her daily thoughts and cares, I warn you not to be surprised if this bud of friendship open like the evening primrose, with a sound as of a sudden stolen kiss, and lo ! the flower of full-blown love lies unfolded before you.

And now the days had come for our little friend, whose whims and weaknesses had interested us, perhaps, as much as his better traits, to make ready for that long journey which is easier to the cripple than to the strong man, and on which none enters so willingly as he who has borne the life-long load of infirmity during his earthly pilgrimage. At this point, under most circumstances, I would close the doors and draw the veil of privacy before the chamber where the birth which we call death, out of life into the unknown world, is working its mystery. But this friend of ours stood alone in the world, and, as the last act of his life was mainly in harmony with the rest of its drama, I do not here feel the force of the objection commonly lying against that death-bed literature which forms the staple of a certain portion of the press. Let me explain what I mean, so that my readers may think for themselves a little, before they accuse me of hasty expressions.

The Roman Catholic Church has certain formulæ for its dying children, to which almost all of them attach the greatest importance. There is hardly a criminal so abandoned that he is not anxious to receive the "consolations of religion" in his last hours. Even if he be senseless, but still living, I think that the form is gone through with, just as baptism is administered to the unconscious new-born child. Now we do not quarrel with these forms. We look with reverence and affection upon all symbols which give peace and comfort to our fellow-creatures. But the value of the new-born child's passive consent to the ceremony is null, as testimony to the truth of a doctrine. The automatic closing of a dying man's lips on the consecrated wafer proves nothing in favour of the Real Presence, or any other dogma. And, speaking generally, the evidence of dying men in favour of any belief is to be received with great caution.

They commonly tell the truth about their present feelings, no doubt. A dying man's deposition about anything *he knows* is good evidence. But it is of much less consequence what a man thinks and says when he is changed by pain, weakness, apprehension, than what he thinks when he is truly and wholly himself. Most murderers die in a very pious frame of mind,

expecting to go to glory at once: yet no man believes he shall meet a larger average of pirates and cut-throats in the streets of the New Jerusalem, than of honest folks that died in their beds.

Unfortunately, there has been a very great tendency to make capital of various kinds out of dying men's speeches. The lies that have been put into their mouths for this purpose are endless. The prime minister, whose last breath was spent in scolding his nurse, dies with a magnificent apothegm on his lips—manufactured by a reporter. Addison gets up a *tableau* and utters an admirable sentiment—or somebody makes the posthumous dying epigram for him. The incoherent babble of green fields is translated into the language of stately sentiment. One would think, all that dying men had to do was to say the prettiest thing they could—to make their rhetorical point—and then bow themselves politely out of the world.

Worse than this is the torturing of dying people to get their evidence in favour of this or that favourite belief. The camp-followers of proselyting sects have come in at the close of every life where they could get in, to strip the languishing soul of its thoughts, and carry them off as spoils. The Roman Catholic or other priest who insists on the reception of his formula means kindly, we trust, and very commonly succeeds in getting the acquiescence of the subject of his spiritual surgery. But do not let us take the testimony of people who are in the worst condition to form opinions as evidence of the truth or falsehood of that which they accept. A lame man's opinion of dancing is not good for much. A poor fellow who can neither eat nor drink, who is sleepless and full of pains, whose flesh has wasted from him, whose blood is like water, who is gasping for breath, is not in a condition to judge fairly of human life, which in all its main adjustments is intended for men in a normal, healthy condition. It is a remark I have heard from the wise Patriarch of the Medical Profession among us, that the moral condition of patients with disease *above* the great breathing-muscle, the diaphragm, is much more hopeful than that of patients with disease *below* it, in the digestive organs. Many an honest ignorant man has given us pathology when he thought he was giving us psychology. With this preliminary caution I shall proceed to the story of the Little Gentleman's leaving us.

When the Divinity-Student found that our fellow-boarder was not likely to remain long with us, he, being a young man of tender conscience and kindly nature, was not a little exercised on his behalf. It was undeniable that on several occasions the Little Gentleman had expressed himself with a good deal of freedom on a class of subjects which, according to the Divinity-

Student, he had no right to form an opinion upon. He therefore considered his future welfare in jeopardy.

The Muggletonian sect have a very odd way of dealing with people. If I, the Professor, will only give in to the Muggletonian doctrine, there shall be no question through all that persuasion that I am competent to judge of that doctrine; nay, I shall be quoted as evidence of its truth, while I live, and cited, after I am dead, as testimony in its behalf; but if I utter any ever so slight Anti-Muggletonian sentiment, then I become *incompetent to form any opinion on the matter*. This, you cannot fail to observe, is exactly the way the pseudo-sciences go to work, as explained in my Lecture on Phrenology. Now I hold that he whose testimony would be accepted in behalf of the Muggletonian doctrine, has a right to be heard against it. Whoso offers me any article of belief for my signature implies that I am competent to form an opinion upon it; and if my positive testimony in its favour is of any value, then my negative testimony against it is also of value.

I thought my young friend's attitude was a little too much like that of the Muggletonians. I also remarked a singular timidity on his part lest somebody should "unsettle" somebody's faith—as if faith did not require exercise as much as any other living thing, and were not all the better for a shaking up now and then. I don't mean that it would be fair to bother Bridget, the wild Irish girl, or Joice Heth, the centenarian, or any other intellectual non-combatant; but all persons who proclaim a belief which passes judgment on their neighbours, must be ready to have it "unsettled," that is, questioned, at all times and by anybody—just as those who set up bars across a thoroughfare must expect to have them taken down by every one who wants to pass, if he is strong enough.

Besides, to think of trying to water-proof the American mind against the questions that Heaven rains down upon it shows a misapprehension of our new conditions. If to question everything be unlawful and dangerous, we had better undeclare our independence at once; for what the declaration means is the right to question everything, even the truth of its own fundamental proposition.

The old-world order of things is an arrangement of locks and canals, where everything depends on keeping the gates shut, and so holding the upper waters at their level; but the system under which the young republican American is born trusts the whole unimpeded tide of life to the great elemental influences, as the vast rivers of the continent settle their own level in obedience to the laws that govern the planet, and the spheres that surround it.

The Divinity-Student was not quite up to the idea of the

commonwealth, as our young friend the Marylander, for instance, understood it. He could not get rid of that notion of private property in truth, with the right to fence it in, and put up a sign-board, thus :—

**ALL TRESPASSERS ARE WARNED OFF THESE GROUNDS !**

He took the young Marylander to task for going to the church of the Galileans, where he had several times accompanied Iris of late.

I am a Churchman, the young man said, by education and habit. I love my old Church for many reasons, but most of all because I think it has educated me out of its own forms into the spirit of its highest teachings. I think I belong to the "Broad Church," if any of you can tell what that means.

I had the rashness to attempt to answer the question myself. Some say the Broad Church means the collective mass of good people of all denominations. Others say that such a definition is nonsense ; that a church is an organization, and the scattered good folks are no organization at all. They think that men will eventually come together on the basis of one or two or more common articles of belief, and form a great unity. Do they see what this amounts to ? It means an equal division of intellect ! It is mental agrarianism ! a thing that never was and never will be, until national and individual idiosyncrasies have ceased to exist. The man of thirty-nine beliefs holds the man of one belief a pauper ; he is not going to give up thirty-eight of them for the sake of fraternizing with the other in the temple which bears on its front, "*Deo erexit Voltaire.*" A church is a garden, I have heard it said, and the illustration was neatly handled. Yes, and there is no such thing as a *broad* garden. It must be fenced in, and whatever is fenced in is narrow. You cannot have arctic and tropical plants growing together in it, except by the forcing system, which is a mighty narrow piece of business. You can't make a village or a parish or a family think alike, yet you suppose that you can make a world pinch its beliefs or pad them to a single pattern ! Why, the very life of an ecclesiastical organization is a life of *induction*, a state of perpetually disturbed equilibrium kept up by another charged body in the neighbourhood. If the two bodies touch and share their respective charges, down goes the index of the electrometer !

Do you know that every man has a religious belief peculiar to himself ? Smith is always a Smithite. He takes in exactly Smith's-worth of knowledge, Smith's-worth of truth, of beauty, of divinity. And Brown has from time immemorial been trying to burn him, to excommunicate him, to anonymous-article him,

because he did not take in Brown's-worth of knowledge, truth, beauty, divinity. He cannot do it, any more than a pint-pot can hold a quart, or a quart-pot be filled by a pint. Iron is essentially the same everywhere and always ; but the sulphate of iron is never the same as the carbonate of iron. Truth is invariable ; but the *Smithate* of truth must always differ from the *Brownate* of truth.

The wider the intellect, the larger and simpler the expressions in which its knowledge is embodied. The inferior race, the degraded and enslaved people, the small-minded individual, live in the details which to larger minds and more advanced tribes of men reduce themselves to axioms and laws. As races and individual minds must always differ just as sulphates and carbonates do, I cannot see ground for expecting the Broad Church to be founded on any fusion of *intellectual* beliefs, which of course implies that those who hold the larger number of doctrines as essential shall come down to those who hold the smaller number. These doctrines are to the *negative* aristocracy what the quarterings of their coats are to the *positive* orders of nobility.

The Broad Church, I think, will never be based on anything that requires the use of *language*. Freemasonry gives an idea of such a church, and a brother is known and cared for in a strange land where no word of his can be understood. The apostle of this church may be a deaf mute carrying a cup of cold water to a thirsting fellow-creature. The cup of cold water does not require to be translated for a foreigner to understand it. I am afraid the only Broad Church possible is one that has its creed in the heart, and not in the head,—that we shall know its members by their fruits, and not by their words. If you say this communion of well-doers is no church, I can only answer, that all *organized* bodies have their limits of size, and that when we find a man a hundred feet high and thirty feet broad across the shoulders, we will look out for an organization that shall include all Christendom.

Some of us do practically recognize a Broad Church and a Narrow Church, however. The Narrow Church may be seen in the ship's boats of humanity, in the long boat, in the jolly boat, in the captain's gig, lying off the poor old vessel, thanking God that *they* are safe, and reckoning how soon the hulk containing the mass of their fellow-creatures will go down. The Broad Church is on board, working hard at the pumps, and very slow to believe that the ship will be swallowed up with so many poor people in it, fastened down under the hatches ever since it floated.

—All this, of course, was nothing but my poor notion about these matters. I am simply an "outsider," you know.

only it doesn't do very well for a nest of Hingham boxes to talk too much about outsiders and insiders !

After this talk of ours, I think these two young people went pretty regularly to the Church of the Galileans. Still they could not keep away from the sweet harmonies and rhythmic litanies of Saint Polycarp on the great Church festival-days ; so that, between the two, they were so much together, that the boarders began to make remarks, and our landlady said to me, one day, that, though it was noon of her business, them that had eyes couldn't help seein' that there was somethin' goin' on between them two young people ; she thought the young man was a very likely young man, though jest what his prospects was was unbeknown to her ; but she thought he must be doin' well, and rather guessed he would be able to take care of a family, if he didn't go to takin' a house ; for a gentleman and his wife could board a great deal cheaper than they could keep house ;—but then that girl was nothin' but a child, and wouldn't think of bein' married this five years. They was good boarders, both of 'em, paid regular, and was as pooty a couple as she ever laid eyes on.

—To come back to what I began to speak of before,—the Divinity-Student was exercised in his mind about the Little Gentleman, and, in the kindness of his heart,—for he was a good young man,—and in the strength of his convictions,—for he took it for granted that he and his crowd were right, and that other folks and their crowd were wrong,—he determined to bring the Little Gentleman round to his faith before he died, if he could. So he sent word to the sick man, that he should be pleased to visit him and have some conversation with him ; and received for answer that he would be welcome.

The Divinity-Student made him a visit, therefore, and had a somewhat remarkable interview with him, which I shall briefly relate, without attempting to justify the positions taken by the Little Gentleman. He found him weak, but calm. Iris sat silent by his pillow.

After the usual preliminaries, the Divinity-Student said, in a kind way, that he was sorry to find him in failing health, that he felt concerned for his soul, and was anxious to assist him in making preparations for the great change awaiting him.

I thank you, sir, said the Little Gentleman ; permit me to ask you, what makes you think I am not ready for it, sir, and that you can do anything to help me, sir ?

I address you only as a fellow-man, said the Divinity-Student,—and therefore a fellow-sinner.

I am *not* a man, sir ! said the Little Gentleman. I was born into this world the wreck of a man, and I shall not be judged



with a race to which I do not belong. Look at this ! he said, and held up his withered arm. See there !—and he pointed to his misshapen extremities. Lay your hand here ! and he laid his own on the region of his misplaced heart. I have known nothing of the life of your race. When I first came to my consciousness, I found myself an object of pity, or a sight to show. The first strange child I ever remember hid its face and would not come near me. I was a broken-hearted as well as broken-bodied boy. I grew into the emotions of ripening youth, and all that I could have loved shrank from my presence. I became a man in years, and had nothing in common with manhood but its longings. My life is the dying pang of a worn-out race, and I shall go down alone into the dust, out of this world of men and women, without ever knowing the fellowship of the one or the love of the other. I will not die with a lie rattling in my throat. If another state of being has anything worse in store for me, I have had a long apprenticeship to give me strength that I may bear it. I don't believe it, sir ! I have too much faith for that. God has not left me wholly without comfort, even here. I love this old place where I was born ; the heart of the world beats under the three hills of Boston, sir ! I love this great land, with so many tall men in it, and so many good, noble women. (His eyes turned to the silent figure by his pillow.) I have learned to accept meekly what has been allotted to me, but I cannot honestly say that I think my sin has been greater than my suffering. I bear the ignorance and the evil-doing of whole generations in my single person. I never drew a breath of air nor took a step that was not a punishment for another's fault. I may have had many wrong thoughts, but I cannot have done many wrong deeds, for my cage has been a narrow one, and I have paced it alone. I have looked through the bars and seen the great world of men busy and happy, but I had no part in their doings. I have known what it is to dream of the great passions ; but since my mother kissed me before she died, no woman's lips have pressed my cheek,—nor ever will.

—The young girl's eyes glittered with a sudden film, and almost without a thought, but with a warm human instinct that rushed up into her face with her heart's blood, she bent over and kissed him. It was the sacrament that washed out the memory of long years of bitterness, and I should hold it an unworthy thought to defend her.

The Little Gentleman repaid her with the only tear any of us ever saw him shed.

The Divinity-Student rose from his place, and, turning away from the sick man, walked to the other side of the room, where he bowed his head and was still. All the questions he had



meant to ask had faded from his memory. The tests he had prepared by which to judge of his fellow-creature's fitness for heaven seemed to have lost their virtue. He could trust the crippled child of sorrow to the Infinite Parent. The kiss of the fair-haired girl had been like a sign from heaven, that angels watched over him whom he was presuming but a moment before to summon before the tribunal of his private judgment.

Shall I pray with you? he said, after a pause. A little before he would have said, Shall I pray *for* you? The Christian religion, as taught by its Founder, is full of *sentiment*. So we must not blame the Divinity-Student, if he was overcome by those yearnings of human sympathy which predominate so much more in the sermons of the Master than in the writings of his successors, and which have made the parable of the Prodigal Son the consolation of mankind, as it has been the stumbling-block of all exclusive doctrines.

Pray, said the Little Gentleman.

The Divinity-Student prayed, in low, tender tones, that God would look on his servant lying helpless at the feet of his mercy; that he would remember his long years of bondage in the flesh; that he would deal gently with the bruised reed. Thou hast visited the sins of the fathers upon this their child. Oh, turn away from him the penalties of his own transgressions! Thou hast laid upon him, from infancy, the cross which thy stronger children are called upon to take up; and now that he is fainting under it, be Thou his stay, and do Thou succour him that is tempted! Let his manifold infirmities come between him and Thy judgment; in wrath remember mercy! If his eyes are not opened to all thy truth, let thy compassion lighten the darkness that rests upon him, even as it came through the word of thy Son to blind Bartimeus, who sat by the wayside, begging!

Many more petitions he uttered, but all in the same subdued tone of tenderness. In the presence of helpless suffering, and in the fast-darkening shadow of the Destroyer, he forgot all but his Christian humanity, and cared more about consoling his fellow-man than making a proselyte of him.

This was the last prayer to which the Little Gentleman ever listened. Some change was rapidly coming over him during this last hour of which I have been speaking. The excitement of pleading his cause before his self-elected spiritual adviser,—the emotion which overcame him, when the young girl obeyed the sudden impulse of her feelings and pressed her lips to his cheek,—the thoughts that mastered him while the Divinity-Student poured out his soul for him in prayer, might well hurry on the inevitable moment. When the Divinity-Student had uttered his last petition, commending him to the Father through

His Son's intercession, he turned to look upon him before leaving his chamber. His face was changed. There is a language of the human countenance which we all understand without an interpreter, though the lineaments belong to the rudest savage that ever stammered in an unknown barbaric dialect. By the stillness of the sharpened features, by the blankness of the tearless eyes, by the fixedness of the smileless mouth, by the deadening tints, by the contracted brow, by the dilating nostril, we know that the soul is soon to leave its mortal tenement, and is already closing up its windows and putting out its fires. Such was the aspect of the face upon which the Divinity-Student looked, after the brief silence which followed his prayer. The change had been rapid, though not that abrupt one which is liable to happen at any moment in these cases. The sick man looked towards him. Farewell, he said, I thank you. Leave me alone with her.

When the Divinity-Student had gone, and the Little Gentleman found himself alone with Iris, he lifted his hand to his neck, and took from it, suspended by a slender chain, a quaint, antique-looking key,—the same key I had once seen him holding. He gave this to her, and pointed to a carved cabinet opposite his bed, one of those that had so attracted my curious eyes and set me wondering as to what it might contain.

Open it, he said, and light the lamp. The young girl walked to the cabinet and unlocked the door. A deep recess appeared, lined with black velvet, against which stood in white relief an ivory crucifix. A silver lamp hung over it. She lighted the lamp and came back to the bedside. The dying man fixed his eyes upon the figure of the dying Saviour. Give me your hand, he said; and Iris placed her right hand in his left. So they remained, until presently his eyes lost their meaning, though they still remained vacantly fixed upon the white image. Yet he held the young girl's hand firmly, as if it were leading him through some deep-shadowed valley and it was all he could cling to. But presently an involuntary muscular contraction stole over him, and his terrible dying grasp held the poor girl as if she were wedged in an engine of torture. She pressed her lips together and sat still. The inexorable hand held her tighter and tighter, until she felt as if her own slender fingers would be crushed in its grip. It was one of the tortures of the Inquisition she was suffering, and she could not stir from her place. Then, in her great anguish, she, too, cast her eyes upon that dying figure, and, looking upon its pierced hands and feet and side and lacerated forehead, she felt that she also must suffer uncomplaining. In the moment of her sharpest pain she did not forget the duties of her tender office, but dried the dying man's moist forehead with her handkerchief, even while

the dews of agony were glistening on her own. How long this lasted she never could tell. *Time* and *thirst* are two things you and I talk about ; but the victims whom holy men and righteous judges used to stretch on their engines knew better what they meant than you or I !—What is that great bucket of water for ? said the Marchioness de Brinvilliers, before she was placed on the rack. *For you to drink*, said the torturer to the little woman. She could not think that it would take such a flood to quench the fire in her and so keep her alive for her confession. The torturer knew better than she.

After a time not to be counted in minutes, as the clock measures,—without any warning,—there came a swift change of his features ; his face turned white, as the waters whiten when a sudden breath passes over their still surface ; the muscles instantly relaxed, and Iris, released at once from her care for the sufferer and from his unconscious grasp, fell senseless, with a feeble cry,—the only utterance of her long agony.

Perhaps you sometimes wander in through the iron gates of the Copp's Hill burial-ground. You love to stroll round among the graves that crowd each other in the thickly peopled soil of that breezy summit. You love to lean on the freestone slab which lies over the bones of the Mathers,—to read the epitaph of stout William Clark, "Despiser of Sorry Persons and Little Actions,"—to stand by the stone grave of sturdy Daniel Malcolm and look upon the splintered slab that tells the old rebel's story,—to kneel by the triple stone that says how the three Worthylakes, father, mother, and young daughter, died on the same day and lie buried there ; a mystery ; the subject of a moving ballad, by the late BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,—as may be seen in his autobiography, which will explain the secret of the triple gravestone ; though the old philosopher has made a mistake, unless the stone is wrong.

Not very far from that you will find a fair mound, of dimensions fit to hold a well-grown man. I will not tell you the inscription upon the stone which stands at its head ; for I do not wish you to be *sure* of the resting-place of one who could not bear to think that he should be known as a cripple among the dead, after being pointed at so long among the living. There is one sign, it is true, by which, if you have been a sagacious reader of these papers, you will at once know it ; but I fear you read carelessly, and must study them more diligently before you will detect the hint to which I allude.

The Little Gentleman lies where he longed to lie, among the old names and the old bones of the old Boston people. At the foot of his resting-place is the river, alive with the wings and

antennæ of its colossal water-insects ; over opposite are the great war-ships, and the heavy guns, which, when they roar, shake the soil in which he lies ; and in the steeple of Christ Church, hard by, are the sweet chimes which are the Boston boy's *Ranz des Vaches*, whose echoes follow him all the world over.

### IN PACE !

I told you a good while ago that the Little Gentleman could not do a better thing than to leave all his money, whatever it might be, to the young girl who has since that established such a claim upon him. He did not, however. A considerable bequest to one of our public institutions keeps his name in grateful remembrance. The telescope through which he was fond of watching the heavenly bodies, and the movements of which had been the source of such odd fancies on my part, is now the property of a Western College. You smile as you think of my taking it for a fleshless human figure, when I saw its tube pointing to the sky, and thought it was an arm, under the white drapery thrown over it for protection. So do I smile *now* ; I belong to the numerous class who are prophets after the fact, and hold my nightmares very cheap by daylight.

I have received many letters of inquiry as to the sound *resembling a woman's voice*, which occasioned me so many perplexities. Some thought there was no question that he had a second apartment, in which he had made an asylum for a deranged female relative. Others were of opinion that he was, as I once suggested, a "Bluebeard" with patriarchal tendencies, and I have even been censured for introducing so Oriental an element into my record of boarding-house experience.

Come in and see me, the Professor, some evening when I have nothing else to do, and ask me to play you *Tartini's Devil's Sonata* on that extraordinary instrument in my possession, well known to amateurs as one of the master-pieces of *Joseph Guarnerius*. The *vox humana* of the great Haerlem organ is very lifelike, and the same stop in the organ of the Cambridge chapel might be mistaken in some of its tones for a human voice ; but I think you never heard anything come so near the cry of a *prima donna* as the A string and the E string of this instrument. A single fact will illustrate the resemblance. I was executing some *tours de force* upon it one evening, when the policeman of our district rang the bell sharply, and asked what was the matter in the house. He had heard a woman's screams,—he was sure of it. I had to make the instrument *sing* before his eyes before he could be satisfied that he had not heard the cries of a woman. This instrument was bequeathed to me by the Little Gentleman. Whether it had any-

thing to do with the sounds I heard coming from his chamber, you can form your own opinion ;—I have no other conjecture to offer. It is *not true* that a second apartment with a secret entrance was found ; and the story of the veiled lady is the invention of one of the Reporters.

Bridget, the housemaid, always insisted that he died a Catholic. She had seen the crucifix, and believed that he prayed on his knees before it. The last circumstance is very probably true ; indeed, there was a spot worn on the carpet just before this cabinet which might be thus accounted for. Why he, whose whole life was a crucifixion, should not love to look on that divine image of blameless suffering, I cannot see ; on the contrary, it seems to me the most natural thing in the world that he should. But there are those who want to make private property of everything, and can't make up their minds that people who don't think as they do should claim any interest in that infinite compassion expressed in the central figure of the Christendom which includes us all.

The Divinity-Student expressed a hope before the boarders that he should meet him in heaven. The question is, whether he'll meet *you*, said the young fellow John, rather smartly. The Divinity-Student hadn't thought of *that*.

However, he is a worthy young man, and I trust I have shown him in a kindly and respectful light. He will get a parish by-and-by ; and, as he is about to marry the sister of an old friend,—the Schoolmistress, whom some of us remember,—and as all sorts of expensive accidents happen to young married ministers, he will be under bonds to the amount of his salary, which means starvation if they are forfeited, to think all his days as he thought when he was settled,—unless the majority of his people change with him or in advance of him. A hard case, to which nothing could reconcile a man, except that the faithful discharge of daily duties in his personal relations with his parishioners will make him useful enough in his way, though as a thinker he may cease to exist before he has reached middle age.

—— Iris went into mourning for the Little Gentleman. Although, as I have said, he left the bulk of his property, by will, to a public institution, he added a codicil, by which he disposed of various pieces of property as tokens of kind remembrance. It was in this way I became the possessor of the wonderful instrument I have spoken of, which had been purchased for him out of an Italian convent. The landlady was comforted with a small legacy. The following extract relates to Iris :  
“ —— in consideration of her manifold acts of kindness, but only in token of grateful remembrance, and by no means as a reward for services which cannot be compensated, a certain

message, with all the land thereto appertaining, situate in—— Street, at the North End, so called, of Boston, aforesaid, the same being the house in which I was born, but now inhabited by several families, and known as ‘the Rookery.’” Iris had also the crucifix, the portrait, and the red-jewelled ring. The funeral or death’s-head ring was buried with him.

It was a good while, after the Little Gentleman was gone, before our boarding-house recovered its wonted cheerfulness. There was a flavour in his whims and local prejudices that we liked, even while we smiled at them. It was hard to see the tall chair thrust away among useless lumber, to dismantle his room, to take down the picture of Leah, the handsome Witch of Essex, to move away the massive shelves that held the books he loved; to pack up the tube through which he used to study the silent stars, looking down at him like the eyes of dumb creatures, with a kind of stupid half-consciousness that did not worry him as did the eyes of men and women, and hardest of all to displace that sacred figure to which his heart had always turned and found refuge, in the feelings it inspired, from all the perplexities of his busy brain. It was hard, but it had to be done.

And by-and-by we grew cheerful again, and the breakfast-table wore something of its old look. The Koh-i-noor, as we named the gentleman with the *diamond*, left us, however, soon after that “little mill,” as the young fellow John called it, where he came off second best. His departure was no doubt hastened by a note from the landlady’s daughter, inclosing a lock of purple hair which she “had valued as a pledge of affection, ere she knew the hollowness of the vows he had breathed,” speedily followed by another, inclosing the landlady’s bill. The next morning he was missing, as were his limited wardrobe and the trunk that held it. Three empty bottles of Mrs. Allen’s celebrated preparation, each of them asserting, on its word of honour as a bottle, that its former contents were “not a dye,” were all that was left to us of the Koh-i-noor.

From this time forward, the landlady’s daughter manifested a decided improvement in her style of carrying herself before the boarders. She abolished the odious, little, flat, gummy side-curl. She left off various articles of “jewellery.” She began to help her mother in some of her household duties. She became a regular attendant on the ministrations of a very worthy clergyman, having been attracted to his meeting by witnessing a marriage ceremony in which he called a man and a woman a “gentleman” and a “lady,”—a stroke of gentility which quite overcame her. She even took a part in what she called a *Sabbath* school, though it was held on Sunday, and by no means on Saturday, as the name she intended to utter implied. All this, which was very sincere, as I believe, on her part, and

attended with a great improvement in her character, ended in her bringing home a young man, with straight, sandy hair, brushed so as to stand up steeply above his forehead, wearing a pair of green spectacles, and dressed in black broadcloth. His personal aspect, and a certain solemnity of countenance, led me to think he must be a clergyman; and as Master Benjamin Franklin blurted out before several of us boarders, one day, that "Sis had got a beau," I was pleased at the prospect of her becoming a minister's wife. On inquiry, however, I found that the somewhat solemn look which I had noticed was indeed a professional one, but not clerical. He was a young undertaker, who had just succeeded to a thriving business. Things, I believe, are going on well at this time of writing, and I am glad for the landlady's daughter and her mother. Sextons and undertakers are the cheerfullest people in the world at home, as comedians and circus-clowns are the most melancholy in their domestic circle.

As our old boarding-house is still in existence, I do not feel at liberty to give too minute a statement of the present condition of each and all of its inmates. I am happy to say, however, that they are all alive and well, up to this time. That kind old gentleman who sat opposite to me is growing older, as old men will, but still smiles benignantly on all the boarders, and has come to be a kind of father to all of them, so that on his birthday there is always something like a family festival. The Poor Relation, even, has warmed into a filial feeling towards him, and on his last birthday made him a beautiful present, namely, a very handsomely bound copy of Blair's celebrated poem, "The Grave."

The young man John is still, as he says, "in fust-rate fettle." I saw him spar, not long since, at a private exhibition, and do himself great credit in a set-to with Henry Finnegass, Esq., a professional gentleman of celebrity. I am pleased to say that he has been promoted to an upper clerkship, and, in consequence of his rise in office, has taken an apartment somewhat lower down than number "forty-seven," as he facetiously called his attic. Whether there is any truth, or not, in the story of his attachment to, and favourable reception by, the daughter of the head of an extensive wholesale grocer's establishment, I will not venture an opinion; I may say, however, that I have met him repeatedly in company with a very well-nourished and high-coloured young lady, who, I understand, is the daughter of the house in question.

Some of the boarders were of opinion that Iris did not return the undisguised attentions of the handsome young Marylander. Instead of fixing her eyes steadily on him, as she used to look upon the Little Gentleman, she would turn them away, as if to



avoid his own. They often went to church together, it is true ; but nobody, of course, supposes there is any relation between religious sympathy and those wretched "sentimental" movements of the human heart upon which it is commonly agreed that nothing better is based than society, civilization, friendship, the relation of husband and wife, and of parent and child, and which many people must think were singularly overrated by the Teacher of Nazareth, whose whole life, as I said before, was full of sentiment, loving this or that young man, pardoning this or that sinner, weeping over the dead, mourning for the doomed city, blessing, and perhaps kissing, the little children, so that the Gospels are still cried over almost as often as the last work of fiction !

But one fine June morning there rumbled up to the door of our boarding-house a hack containing a lady inside and a trunk on the outside. It was our friend the lady-patroness of Miss Iris, the same who had been called by her admiring pastor "The Model of all the Virtues." Once a week she had written a letter, in a rather formal hand, but full of good advice, to her young charge. And now she had come to carry her away, thinking that she had learned all she was likely to learn under her present course of teaching. The Model, however, was to stay awhile,—a week, or more,—before they should leave together.

Iris was obedient, as she was bound to be. She was respectful, grateful, as a child is with a just, but not tender parent. Yet something was wrong. She had one of her trances, and became statue-like, as before, only the day after the Model's arrival. She was wan and silent, tasted nothing at table, smiled as if by a forced effort, and often looked vaguely away from those who were looking at her, her eyes just glazed with the shining moisture of a tear that must not be allowed to gather and fall. Was it grief at parting from the place where her strange friendship had grown up with the Little Gentleman? Yet she seemed to have become reconciled to his loss, and rather to have a deep feeling of gratitude that she had been permitted to care for him in his last weary days.

The Sunday after the Model's arrival, that lady had an attack of headache, and was obliged to shut herself up in a darkened room alone. Our two young friends took the opportunity to go together to the church of the Galileans. They said but little going,—“collecting their thoughts” for the service, I devoutly hope. My kind good friend the pastor preached that day one of his sermons that make us all feel like brothers and sisters, and his text was that affectionate one from John, “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” When Iris and her friend came out of church, they were both pale, and walked a space without speaking.

At last the young man said,—You and I are not little children, Iris!

She looked in his face an instant, as if startled, for there was something strange in the tone of his voice. She smiled faintly, but spoke never a word.

In deed and in truth, Iris,—

What shall a poor girl say or do, when a strong man falters in his speech before her, and can do nothing better than hold out his hand to finish his broken sentence?

The poor girl said nothing, but quietly laid her ungloved hand in his,—the little soft white hand which had ministered so tenderly and suffered so patiently.

The blood came back to the young man's cheeks, as he lifted it to his lips, even as they walked there in the street, touched it gently with them, and said,—“It is mine!”

Iris did not contradict him.

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The seasons pass by so rapidly, that I am startled to think how much has happened since these events I was describing. Those two young people would insist on having their own way about their own affairs, notwithstanding the good lady, so justly called the Model, insisted that the age of twenty-five years was as early as any discreet young lady should think of incurring the responsibilities, etc., etc. Long before Iris had reached that age, she was the wife of a young Maryland engineer, directing some of the vast constructions of his native State,—where he was growing rich fast enough to be able to decline that famous Russian offer which would have made him a kind of nabob in a few years. Iris does not write verse often, nowadays, but she sometimes draws. The last sketch of hers I have seen in my Southern visits was of two children, a boy and girl, the youngest holding a silver goblet, like the one she held that evening when I—I was so struck with her statue-like beauty. If in the later summer months you find the grass marked with footsteps around that grave on Copp's Hill I told you of, and flowers scattered over it, you may be sure that Iris is here on her annual visit to the home of her childhood and that excellent lady whose only fault was, that Nature had written out her list of virtues on ruled paper, and forgotten to rub out the lines.

One thing more I must mention. Being on the Common, last Sunday, I was attracted by the cheerful spectacle of a well-dressed and somewhat youthful papa wheeling a very elegant little carriage containing a stout baby. A buxom young lady watched them from one of the stone seats, with an interest which could be nothing less than maternal. I at once recognized my old friend, the young fellow whom we called John. He was de-

lighted to see me, introduced me to "Madam," and would have the lusty infant out of the carriage, and hold him up for me to look at.

Now, then,—he said to the two-year-old,—show the gentleman how you hit from the shoulder. Whereupon the little imp pushed his fat fist straight into my eye, to his father's intense satisfaction.

Fust-rate little chap, said the papa. Chip of the old block. Regl'r little Johnny, you know.

I was so much pleased to find the young fellow settled in life, and pushing about one of "them little articles" he had seemed to want so much, that I took my "punishment" at the hands of the infant pugilist with great equanimity. And how is the old boarding-house? I asked.

A. I, he answered. Painted and papered as good as new. Gahs in all the rooms up to the sky-parlours. Old woman's layin' up money, they say. Means to send Ben Franklin to college. Just then the first bell rang for church, and my friend, who, I understand, has become a most exemplary member of society, said he must be off to get ready for meetin', and told the young one to "shake dada," which he did with his closed fist, in a somewhat menacing manner. And so the young man John, as we used to call him, took the pole of the miniature carriage, and pushed the small pugilist before him homewards, followed, in a somewhat leisurely way, by his pleasant-looking lady-companion and I sent a sigh and a smile after him.

That evening, as soon as it was dark, I could not help going round by the old boarding-house. The "gahs" was lighted, but the curtains, or, more properly, the painted shades, were not down. And so I stood there and looked in along the table where the boarders sat at the evening meal,—our old breakfast-table, which some of us feel as if we knew so well. There were new faces at it, but also old and familiar ones. The landlady, in a wonderfully smart cap, looking young, comparatively speaking, and as if half the wrinkles had been ironed out of her forehead. Her daughter, in rather dressy half-mourning, with a vast brooch of jet, got up, apparently, to match the gentleman next her, who was in black costume and sandy hair,—the last rising straight from his forehead, like the marble flame one sometimes sees at the top of a funeral urn. The Poor Relation, not in absolute black, but in a stuff with specks of white; as much as to say, that, if there were any more Hiram's left to sigh for her there were pin-holes in the night of her despair, through which a ray of hope might find its way to an adorer. Master Benjamin Franklin, grown taller of late, was in the act of splitting his face open with a wedge of pie, so that his features were seen to disadvantage for the moment. The good old gentleman was sitting

still and thoughtful. All at once he turned his face toward the window where I stood, and, just as if he had seen me, smiled his benignant smile. It was a recollection of some past pleasant moment ; but it fell upon me like the blessing of a father.

I kissed my hand to them all, unseen as I stood in the outer darkness ; and as I turned and went my way, the table and all around it faded into the realm of twilight shadows and of midnight dreams.

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And so my year's record is finished. The Professor has talked less than his predecessor, but he has heard and seen more. Thanks to all those friends who from time to time have sent their messages of kindly recognition and fellow-feeling ! Peace to all such as may have been vexed in spirit by any utterance these pages have repeated ! They will, doubtless, forget for the moment the difference in the hues of truth we look at through our human prisms, and join in singing (inwardly) this hymn to the Source of the light we all need to lead us, and the warmth which alone can make us all brothers.

#### A SUNDAY HYMN.

LORD of all being ! throned afar,  
Thy glory flames from sun and star ;  
Centre and soul of every sphere,  
Yet to each loving heart how near !

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray  
Sheds on our path the glow of day ;  
Star of our hope, thy softened light  
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn ;  
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn ;  
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign ;  
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine !

Lord of all life, below, above,  
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,  
Before thy ever-blazing throne  
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,  
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,  
Till all thy living altars claim  
One holy light, one heavenly flame !

THE END.

**THE**  
**Poet at the Breakfast-Table**



# THE POET

AT

## THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

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THE idea of a man's 'interviewing' himself is rather odd, to be sure. But then that is what we are all of us doing every day. I talk half the time to find out my own thoughts, as a school-boy turns his pockets inside out to see what is in them. He brings to light all sorts of personal property he had forgotten in his inventory.

'You don't know what your thoughts are going to be beforehand?' said the 'Member of the Haouse,' as he calls himself.

'Why, of course I don't. Bless your honest legislative soul, I suppose I have as many bound volumes of notions of one kind and another in my head as you have in your Representatives' library up there at the State House. I have to tumble them over and over and open them in a hundred places, and sometimes cut the leaves here and there, to find what I think about this and that. And a good many people who flatter themselves they are talking wisdom to me, are only helping me to get at the shelf and the book and the page where I shall find my own opinion about the matter in question.'

The Member's eyes began to look heavy.

'It's a very queer place, that receptacle a man fetches his talk out of. The library comparison doesn't exactly hit it. You stow away some idea and don't want it, say for ten years. When it turns up at last it has got so jammed and crushed out of shape by the other ideas packed with it, that it is no more like what it was than a raisin is like a grape on the vine, or a fig from a drum like one hanging on the tree. Then, again, some kinds of thoughts breed in the dark of one's mind like the blind fishes in the Mammoth Cave. We can't see them and they can't see us; but sooner or later the daylight gets in and we find that some cold, fishy little negative has been spawning all over our beliefs, and the brood of blind questions it has given birth to are burrowing round and under and butting their blunt noses against the pillars of faith we thought the whole world might lean on. And then, again,



some of our old beliefs are dying out every year, and others feed on them and grow fat, or get poisoned, as the case may be. And so, you see, you can't tell what the thoughts are that you have got salted down, as one may say, till you run a streak of talk through them, as the market people run a butter-scoop through a firkin.

'Don't talk, thinking you are going to find out your neighbour, for you won't do it, but talk to find out yourself. There is more of you—and less of you, in spots, very likely—than you know.'

The Member gave a slight but unequivocal start just here. It does seem as if perpetual somnolence was the price of listening to other people's wisdom. This was one of those transient night-mares that one may have in a doze of twenty seconds. He thought a certain imaginary Committee of Safety of a certain imaginary Legislature was proceeding to burn down his haystack, in accordance with an Act, entitled an Act to make the poor richer, by making the rich poorer. And the chairman of the committee was instituting a forcible exchange of hats with him, to his manifest disadvantage, for he had just bought him a new beaver. He told this dream afterwards to one of the boarders.

There was nothing very surprising, therefore, in his asking a question not very closely related to what had gone before.

'Do you think they mean business?'

'I beg your pardon, but it would be of material assistance to me in answering your question if I knew who "they" might happen to be.'

'Why, those chaps that are setting folks on to burn us all up in our beds. Political firebugs we call 'em up our way. Want to substitoot the match-box for the ballot-box. Scare all our old women half to death.'

'O—ah—yes—to be sure. I don't believe they say what the papers put into their mouths any more than that a friend of mine wrote the letter about Worcester's and Webster's Dictionaries, that he had to disown the other day. These newspaper fellows are half asleep when they make up their reports at two or three o'clock in the morning, and fill out the speeches to suit themselves. I do remember some things that sounded pretty bad—about as bad as nitro-glycerine, for that matter. But I don't believe they ever said 'em, when they spoke their pieces, or if they said 'em, I know they didn't mean 'em. Something like this, wasn't it? If the majority didn't do something the minority wanted 'em to, then the people were to burn up our cities, and knock us down and jump on our stomachs. That was about the kind of talk, as the papers had it; I don't wonder it scared the old women.'

The Member was wide awake by this time.

'I don't seem to remember of them particular phrases,' he said.

‘Dear me, no ; only levelling everything smack, and trampling us under foot, as the reporters made it out. That means FIRE, I take it, and knocking you down and stamping on you, whichever side of your person happens to be uppermost. Sounded like a threat ; meant, of course, for a warning. But I don’t believe it was in the piece as they spoke it—couldn’t have been. Then, again, Paris wasn’t to blame—as much as to say—so the old women thought—that New York or Boston wouldn’t be to blame if it did the same thing. I’ve heard of political gatherings when they barbecued an ox, but I can’t think there’s a party in this country that wants to barbecue a city. But it isn’t quite fair to frighten the old women. I don’t doubt there are a great many people wiser than I am that wouldn’t be hurt by a hint I am going to give them. It’s no matter what you say when you talk to yourself, but when you talk to other people, your business is to use words with reference to the way in which these other people are like to understand them. These pretended inflammatory speeches, so reported as to seem full of combustibles, even if they were as threatening as they have been represented, would do no harm if read or declaimed in a man’s study to his books, or by the sea-shore to the waves. But they are not so wholesome moral entertainment for the dangerous classes. Boys must not touch off their squibs and crackers too near the powder-magazine. This kind of speech doesn’t help on the millennium much.’

‘It ain’t jest the thing to grease your ex with the ile o’ vitrul,’ said the Member.

‘No ; the wheel of progress will soon stick fast if you do. You can’t keep a dead level long, if you burn everything down flat to make it. Why, bless your soul, if all the cities of the world were reduced to ashes, you’d have a new set of millionnaires in a couple of years or so, out of the trade in potash. In the meantime, what is the use of setting the man with the silver watch against the man with the gold watch, and the man without any watch against them both ?’

‘You can’t go agin human natur,’ said the Member.

‘You speak truly. Here we are travelling through the deserts together, like the children of Israel. Some pick up more manna and catch more quails than others, and ought to help their hungry neighbours more than they do ; that will always be so until we come back to primitive Christianity, the road to which does not seem to be *via* Paris just now ; but we don’t want the incendiary’s pillar of a cloud by day and pillar of fire by night to lead us in the march to civilization, and we don’t want a Moses who will smite the rock, not to bring out water for our thirst, but petroleum to burn us all up with.’

‘It isn’t quite fair to run an opposition to the other funny speaker, Rev. Petroleum V. What’s-his-name,’ spoke up an anonymous boarder.

You may have been thinking, perhaps, that it was I—I, the Poet—who was the chief talker in the one-sided dialogue to which you have been listening. If so, you were mistaken. It was the old man in the spectacles with large round glasses and the iron-grey hair. He does a good deal of the talking at our table, and, to tell the truth, I rather like to hear him. He stirs me up, and finds me occupation in various ways, and especially because he has good solid prejudices that one can rub against, and so get up and let off a superficial intellectual irritation, just as the cattle rub their backs against a rail (you remember Sydney Smith's contrivance in his pasture), or their sides against an apple-tree (I don't know why they take to these so particularly, but you will often find the trunk of an apple-tree as brown and smooth as an old saddle at the height of a cow's ribs). I think they begin rubbing in cold blood, and then, you know, *l'appétit vient en mangeant*, the more they rub the more they want to. That is the way to use your friend's prejudices. This is a sturdy-looking personage of a good deal more than middle age, his face marked with strong manly furrows, records of hard thinking, and square, stand-up fights with life and all its devils. There is a slight touch of satire in his discourse now and then, and an odd way of answering one that makes it hard to guess how much more or less he means than he seems to say. But he is honest, and always has a twinkle in his eye to put you on your guard when he does not mean to be taken quite literally. I think old Ben Franklin had just that look. I know his great-grandson (*in pace*!) had it, and I don't doubt he took it in the straight light of descent, as he did his grand intellect.

The Member of the Haouse evidently comes from one of the lesser inland centres of civilization, where the flora is rich in checkerberries and similar bounties of nature, and the fauna lively with squirrels, woodchucks, and the like; where the leading sportsmen snare partridges, as they are called, and 'hunt' foxes with guns; where rabbits are entrapped in 'figgery fours,' and trout captured with the unpretentious earth-worm, instead of the gorgeous fly; where they get prizes for butter and cheese, and rag-carpets executed by ladies more than seventy years of age; where they wear dress-coats before dinner, and cock their hats on one side when they feel conspicuous and distinguished; where they say 'Sir' to you in their common talk, and have other Arcadian and bucolic ways which are highly unobjectionable, but are not so much admired in cities, where the people are said to be not half so virtuous.

There is with us a boy of modest dimensions, not otherwise especially entitled to the epithet, who ought to be six or seven years old, to judge by the gap left by his front milk-teeth, these having resigned in favour of their successors, who have not yet presented their credentials. He is rather old for an *enfant*

*terrible*, and quite too young to have grown into the bashfulness of adolescence ; but he has some of the qualities of both these engaging periods of development. The Member of the House calls him 'Bub' invariably, which term I take to be an abbreviation of 'Beelzebub,' as 'bus' is the short form of 'omnibus.' Many eminently genteel persons, whose manners make them at home anywhere, being evidently unaware of the true derivation of this word, are in the habit of addressing all unknown children by one of the two terms, 'bub' and 'sis,' which they consider endears them greatly to the young people, and recommends them to the acquaintance of their honoured parents, if these happen to accompany them. The other boarders commonly call our diminutive boarder That Boy. He is a sort of expletive at the table, serving to stop gaps, taking the same place a *washer* does that makes a loose-screw fit, and contriving to get driven in like a wedge between any two chairs where there is a crevice. I shall not call that boy by the monosyllable referred to, because though he has many impish traits at present, he may become civilized and humanized by being in good company. Besides, it is a term which I understand is considered vulgar by the nobility and gentry of the Mother Country, and it is not to be found in Mr. Worcester's Dictionary, on which, as is well known, the literary men of this metropolis are by special statute allowed to be sworn in place of the Bible. I know one, certainly, who never takes his oath on any other dictionary, any advertising fiction to the contrary notwithstanding.

I wanted to write out my account of some of the other boarders, but a domestic occurrence—a somewhat prolonged visit of the landlady, who is rather too anxious that I should be comfortable—broke in upon the continuity of my thoughts, and occasioned—in short, I gave up writing for that day.

I wonder if anything like this ever happened.

Author writing :

'To be, or not to be : that is the question—  
Whether 'tis nobl—'

'William, shall we have pudding to-day, or flapjacks?'

'Flapjacks, an' it please thee, Anne, or a pudding, for that matter ; or what thou wilt, good woman, so thou come not betwixt me and my thought.'

Exit Mistress Anne, with strongly accented closing of the door and murmurs to the effect : 'Ay, marry, 'tis well for thee to talk as if thou hadst no stomach to fill. We poor wives must swink for our masters, while they sit in their arm-chairs, growing as great in the girth through laziness as that ill-mannered old fat man William hath writ of in his books of players' stuff. One had as well meddle with a porkpen, which hath thorns all

over him, as try to deal with William when his eyes be rolling in that mad way.'

William—writing once more—after an exclamation in strong English of the older pattern :

'Whether 'tis nobler—nobler—nobler—

To do what? O these women! these women! to have puddings or flapjacks! Oh!

'Whether 'tis nobler—in the mind—to suffer  
The slings—and arrows—of—'

Oh! Oh! these women! I will e'en step over to the parson's and have a cup of sack with his reverence, for methinks Master Hamlet hath forgot that which was just now on his lips to speak.'

So I shall have to put off making my friends acquainted with the other boarders, some of whom seem to me worth studying and describing. I have something else of a graver character for my readers. I am talking, you know, as a poet; I do not say I deserve the name, but I have taken it, and if you consider me at all, it must be in that aspect. You will therefore, perhaps, be willing to run your eyes over a few pages which I read, of course by request, to a select party of the boarders.

## THE GAMBREL-ROOFED HOUSE AND ITS OUTLOOK.

### A PANORAMA, WITH SIDE-SHOWS.

My birthplace, the home of my childhood and earlier and later boyhood, has within a few months passed out of the ownership of my family into the hands of that venerable Alma Mater who seems to have renewed her youth, and has certainly repainted her dormitories. In truth, when I last revisited that familiar scene and looked upon the *flammantia mœnia* of the old halls, 'Massachusetts' with the dummy clock-dial, 'Harvard' with the garrulous belfry, little 'Holden' with the sculptured unpunishable cherubs over its portal, and the rest of my early brick-and-mortar acquaintances, I could not help saying to myself that I had lived to see the peaceable establishment of the Red Republic of Letters.

Many of the things I shall put down I have no doubt told before in a fragmentary way, how many I cannot be quite sure, as I do not very often read my own prose works. But when a man dies a great deal is said of him which has often been said in other forms, and now this dear old house is dead to me in one sense, and I want to gather up my recollections and wind a string of narrative round them, tying them up like a nosegay for the last tribute; the same blossoms in it I have often laid on its threshold while it was still living for me.

We Americans are all cuckoos—we make our homes in the nests of other birds. I have read somewhere that the lineal descendants of the man who carted off the body of William Rufus, with Walter Tyrrel's arrow sticking in it, have driven a cart (not absolutely the same one, I suppose) in the New Forest from that day to this. I don't quite understand Mr. Ruskin's saying (if he said it) that he couldn't get along in a country where there were no castles, but I do think we lose a great deal in living where there are so few permanent homes. You will see how much I parted with which was not reckoned in the price paid for the old homestead.

I shall say many things which an uncharitable reader might find fault with as personal. I should not dare to call myself a poet if I did not ; for if there is anything that gives one a title to that name, it is that his inner nature is naked and is not ashamed. But there are many such things I shall put in words not because they are personal, but because they are human, and are born of just such experiences as those who hear or read what I say are like to have had in greater or less measure. I find myself so much like other people that I often wonder at the coincidence. It was only the other day that I sent out a copy of verses about my great-grandmother's picture, and I was surprised to find how many other people had portraits of their great-grandmothers or other progenitors about which they felt as I did about mine, and for whom I had spoken, thinking I was speaking for myself only. And so I am not afraid to talk very freely to you, my precious reader or listener. You too, Beloved, were born somewhere, and remember your birthplace or your early home ; for you some house is haunted by recollections ; to some roof you have bid farewell. Your hand is upon mine, then, as I guide my pen. Your heart frames the responses to the litany of my remembrance. For myself, it is a tribute of affection I am rendering, and I should put it on record for my own satisfaction were there none to read or to listen.

I hope you will not say that I have built a pillared portico of introduction to a humble structure of narrative. For when you look at the old gambrel-roofed house, you will see an unpretending mansion, such as very possibly you were born in yourself, or at any rate such a place of residence as your minister or some of your well-to-do country cousins find good enough, but not at all too grand for them. We have stately old Colonial palaces in our ancient village, now a city, and a thriving one—square-fronted edifices that stand back from the vulgar highway, with folded arms, as it were ; social fortresses of the time when the twilight lustre of the throne reached as far as our half-cleared settlement, with a glacis before them in the shape of a long broad gravel-walk, so that in King George's time they looked as formidable to any but the silk-stockings gentry as Gibraltar or Ehrenbreit-

stein to a visitor without the password. We forget all this in the kindly welcome they give us to-day ; for some of them are still standing and doubly famous, as we all know. But the gambrel-roofed house, though stately enough for college dignitaries and scholarly clergymen, was not one of those old Tory, Episcopal-church-goer's strongholds. One of its doors opens directly upon the green, always called the Common ; the other facing the south, a few steps from it, over a paved foot-walk, on the other side of which is the miniature front yard, bordered with lilacs and syringas. The honest mansion makes no pretensions. Accessible, companionable, holding its hand out to all, comfortable, respectable, and even in its way dignified, but not imposing, not a house for his Majesty's Councillor, or the Right Reverend successor of Him who had not where to lay His head, for something like a hundred and fifty years it has stood in its lot, and seen the generations of men come and go like the leaves of the forest. I passed some pleasant hours, a few years since, in the Registry of Deeds and the Town Records, looking up the history of the old house. How those dear friends of mine, the antiquarians, for whose grave councils I compose my features on the too rare Thursdays when I am at liberty to meet them, in whose human herbarium the leaves and blossoms of past generations are so carefully spread out and pressed and laid away, would listen to an expansion of the following brief details into an Historical Memoir !

The estate was the third lot of the eighth ' Squadron ' (whatever that might be), and in the year 1707 was allotted in the distribution of undivided lands to ' Mr. ffox,' the Reverend Jabez Fox, of Woburn, it may be supposed, as it passed from his heirs to the first Jonathan Hastings ; from him to his son, the long-remembered College Steward ; from him in the year 1792 to the Reverend Eliphalet Pearson, Professor of Hebrew and other Oriental languages in Harvard College, whose large personality swam into my ken when I was looking forward to my teens : from him to the progenitors of my unborn self.

I wonder if there are any such beings nowadays as the great Eliphalet, with his large features and conversational *basso profundo*, seemed to me. His very name had something elephantine about it, and it seemed to me that the house shook from cellar to garret at his footfall. Some have pretended that he had Olympian aspirations, and wanted to sit in the seat of Jove, and bear the academic thunderbolt and the ægis inscribed *Christo et Ecclesiæ*. It is a common weakness enough to wish to find one's self in an empty saddle ; Cotton Mather was miserable all his days, I am afraid, after that entry in his Diary : ' This Day Dr. Sewall was chosen President, *for his piety.*'

There is no doubt that the men of the older generation look bigger and more formidable to the boys whose eyes are turned



up at their venerable countenances than the race which succeeds them to the same boys grown older. Everything is twice as large, measured on a three-year-old's three-foot scale as on a thirty-year-old's six-foot scale ; but age magnifies and aggravates persons out of due proportion. Old people are a kind of monsters to little folks ; mild manifestations of the terrible, it may be, but still, with their white locks and ridged and grooved features, which those horrid little eyes exhaust of their details, like so many microscopes, not exactly what human beings ought to be. The middle-aged and young men have left comparatively faint impressions in my memory, but how grandly the procession of the old clergymen who filled our pulpit from time to time, and passed the day under our roof, marches before my closed eyes ! At their head the most venerable David Osgood, the majestic minister of Medford, with massive front and shaggy over-shadowing eyebrows ; following in the train, mild-eyed John Foster of Brighton, with the lambent aurora of a smile about his pleasant mouth, which not even the "Sabbath" could subdue to the true Levitical aspect ; and bulky Charles Stearns of Lincoln, author of 'The Ladies' Philosophy of Love. A Poem. 1797' (how I stared at him ! he was the first living person ever pointed out to me as a poet) ; and Thaddeus Mason Harris of Dorchester (the same who, poor youth, trudging along, staff in hand, being then in a stress of sore need, found all at once that somewhat was adhering to the end of his stick, which somewhat proved to be a gold ring of price, bearing the words, 'God speed thee, Friend !'), already in decadence as I remember him, with head slanting forward and downward as if looking for a place to rest in after his learned labours ; and that other Thaddeus, the old man of West Cambridge, who outwatched the rest so long after they had gone to sleep in their own churchyards, that it almost seemed as if he meant to sit up until the morning of the resurrection ; and bringing up the rear, attenuated but vivacious little Jonathan Homer of Newton, who was, to look upon, a kind of expurgated-Bowdler's family Shakespeare-reduced copy of Voltaire, but very unlike him in wickedness or wit. The good-humoured junior member of our family always loved to make him happy by setting him chirruping about Miles Coverdale's Version, and the Bishop's Bible, and how he wrote to his friend Sir Isaac (Coffin) about something or other, and how Sir Isaac wrote back that he was very much pleased with the contents of his letter, and so on about Sir Isaac *ad libitum*—for the admiral was his old friend, and he was proud of him. The kindly little old gentleman was a collector of Bibles, and made himself believe he thought he should publish a learned Commentary some day or other ; but his friends looked for it only in the Greek Calends,—say on the 31st of April, when that should come round, if you would modernize the phrase. I recall also one or two exceptional

and infrequent visitors with perfect distinctness ; cheerful Elijah Kellogg, a lively missionary from the region of the Quoddy Indians, with much hopeful talk about Sock Bason and his tribe : also poor old Poor-house-Parson Isaac Smith, his head going like a China mandarin, as he discussed the possibilities of the escape of that distinguished captive, whom he spoke of under the name, if I can reproduce phonetically its vibrating nasalities, of ' General Mmbongaparty,'—a name suggestive to my young imagination of a dangerous, loose-jointed skeleton, threatening us all like the armed figure of Death in my little New England Primer.

I have mentioned only the names of those whose images come up pleasantly before me, and I do not mean to say anything which any descendant might not read smilingly. But there were some of the black-coated gentry whose aspect was not so agreeable to me. It is very curious to me to look back on my early likes and dislikes, and see how as a child I was attracted or repelled by such and such ministers, a good deal, as I found out long afterwards, according to their theological beliefs. On the whole, I think the old-fashioned New England divine softening down into Arminianism was about as agreeable as any of them. And here I may remark, that a mellowing rigourist is always a much pleasanter object to contemplate than a tightening liberal, as a cold day warming up to 32° Fahrenheit is much more agreeable than a warm one chilling down to the same temperature. The least pleasing change is that kind of mental hemiplegia which now and then attacks the rational side of a man at about the same period of life when one side of the body is liable to be palsied, and in fact is, very probably, the same thing as palsy, in another form. The worst of it is that the subjects of it never seem to suspect that they are intellectual invalids, stammerers, and cripples at best, but are all the time hitting out at their old friends with the well arm, and calling them hard names out of their twisted mouths.

It was a real delight to have one of those good, hearty, happy, benignant old clergymen pass the Sunday with us, and I can remember some whose advent made the day feel almost like 'Thanksgiving.' But now and then would come along a clerical visitor with a sad face and a wailing voice, which sounded exactly as if somebody must be lying dead upstairs, who took no interest in us children, except a painful one, as being in a bad way with our cheery looks, and did more to unchristianize us with his woe-begone ways than all his sermons were like to accomplish in the other direction. I remember one in particular, who twitted me so with my blessings as a Christian child, and whined so to me about the naked black children who, like the 'Little Vulgar Boy,' 'hadn't got no supper, and hadn't got no ma,' and hadn't got no Catechism (how I wished for the moment I was a little black

boy !), that he did more in that one day to make me a heathen than he had ever done in a month to make a Christian out of an infant Hottentot. What a debt we owe to our friends of the left centre, the Brooklyn, and the Park Street, and the Summer Street ministers ; good wholesome, sound-bodied, sane-minded, cheerful-spirited men, who have taken the place of those wailing *poitrinaires*, with the bandanna handkerchiefs round their meagre throats, and a funeral service in their forlorn physiognomies ! I might have been a minister myself, for aught I know, if this clergyman had not looked and talked so like an undertaker.

All this belongs to one of the side-shows, to which I promised those who would take tickets to the main exhibition should have entrance *gratis*. If I were writing a poem you would expect, as a matter of course, that there would be a digression now and then.

To come back to the old house and its former tenant, the Professor of Hebrew and other Oriental languages. Fifteen years he lived with his family under its roof. I never found the slightest trace of him until a few years ago, when I cleaned and brightened with pious hands the brass lock of 'the study,' which had for many years been covered with a thick coat of paint. On that I found scratched, as with a nail or fork, the following inscription :

### E P E

Only that and nothing more, but the story told itself. Master Edward Pearson, then about as high as the lock, was disposed to immortalize himself in monumental brass, and had got so far towards it, when a sudden interruption, probably a smart box on the ear, cheated him of his fame, except so far as this poor record may rescue it. Dead long ago. I remember him well, a grown man, as a visitor at a later period ; and, for some reason, I recall him in the attitude of the Colossus of Rhodes, standing full before a generous wood-fire, not facing it, but quite the contrary, a perfect picture of content afforded by a blazing hearth contemplated from that point of view, and, as the heat stole through his person and kindled his emphatic features, seeming to me a pattern of manly beauty. What a statue gallery of posturing friends we all have in our memory ! The old Professor himself sometimes visited the house after it had changed hands. Of course, my recollections are not to be wholly trusted, but I always think I see his likeness in a profile face to be found among the illustrations of Rees's Cyclopædia. (See Plates, vol. iv., Plate 2, Painting, Diversities of the Human Face, fig. 4.)

And now let us return to our chief picture. In the days of my earliest remembrance, a row of tall Lombardy poplars mounted guard on the western side of the old mansion. Whether, like the cypress, these trees suggest the idea of the funeral torch or the monumental spire, whether their tremulous leaves make us

afraid by sympathy with their nervous thrills, whether the faint balsamic smell of their leaves and their closely swathed limbs have in them vague hints of dead Pharaohs stiffened in their cerements, I will not guess ; but they always seemed to me to give an air of sepulchral sadness to the house before which they stood sentries. Not so with the row of elms which you may see leading up towards the western entrance. I think the patriarch of them all went over in the great gale of 1815 ; I know I used to shake the youngest of them with my hands, stout as it is now, with a trunk that would defy the bully of Crotona, or the strong man whose *liaison* with Lady Deliah proved so disastrous.

The College plain would be nothing without its elms. As the long hair of a woman is a glory to her, so are these green tresses that bank themselves against the sky in thick clustered masses the ornament and the pride of the classic green. You know the "Washington elm," or if you do not, you had better rekindle your patriotism by reading the inscription, which tells you that under its shadow the great leader first drew his sword at the head of an American army. In a line with that you may see two others : the *coral fan*, as I always called it from its resemblance in form to that beautiful marine growth, and a third a little farther along. I have heard it said that all three were planted at the same time, and that the difference of their growth is due to the slope of the ground,—the Washington elm being lower than either of the others. There is a row of elms just in front of the old house on the south. When I was a child the one at the south-west corner was struck by lightning, and one of its limbs and a long ribbon of bark torn away. The tree never fully recovered its symmetry and vigour, and forty years and more afterwards a second thunder-bolt crashed upon it and set its heart on fire, like those of the lost souls in the Hall of Eblis. Heaven had twice blasted it, and the axe finished what the lightning had begun.

The soil of the University town is divided into patches of sandy and of clayey ground. The Common and the College green, near which the old house stands, are on one of the sandy patches. Four curses are the local inheritance : droughts, dust, mud, and canker-worms. I cannot but think that all the characters of a region help to modify the children born in it. I am fond of making apologies for human nature, and I think I could find an excuse for myself if I, too, were dry and barren and muddy-witted and "cantankerous,"—disposed to get my back up, like those other natives of the soil.

I know this, that the way Mother Earth treats a boy, shapes out a kind of natural theology for him. I fell into Manichean ways of thinking from the teaching of my garden experiences. Like other boys in the country, I had my patch of ground, to which in the spring-time I intrusted the seeds furnished me, with a confident trust in their resurrection and glorification in the

better world of summer. But I soon found that my lines had fallen in a place where a vegetable growth had to run the gauntlet of as many foes and trials as a Christian pilgrim. Flowers would not blow ; daffodils perished like criminals in their condemned caps, without their petals ever seeing daylight ; roses were disfigured with monstrous protrusions through their very centres—something that looked like a second bud pushing through the middle of the corolla ; lettuces and cabbages would not head ; radishes knotted themselves until they looked like centenarians' fingers ; and on every stem, on every leaf, and both sides of it, and at the root of everything that grew, was a professional specialist in the shape of grub, caterpillar, aphid, or other expert, whose business it was to devour that particular part, and help murder the whole attempt at vegetation. Such experiences must influence a child born to them. A sandy soil, where nothing flourishes but weeds and evil beasts of small dimensions, must breed different qualities in its human offspring from one of those fat and fertile spots which the wit whom I have once before quoted described so happily that, if I quoted the passage, its brilliancy would spoil one of my pages, as a diamond breastpin sometimes kills the social effect of the wearer, who might have passed for a gentleman without it. Your arid patch of earth should seem to be the natural birthplace of the leaner virtues and the feebler vices—of temperance and the domestic proprieties on the one hand, with a tendency to light weights in groceries and provisions, and to clandestine abstraction from the person on the other, as opposed to the free hospitality, the broadly planned burglaries, and the largely conceived homicides of our rich Western alluvial regions. Yet nature is never wholly unkind. Economical as she was in my unparadised Eden, hard as it was to make some of my floral houris unveil, still the damask roses sweetened the June breezes, the bladed and plumed flower-de-luces unfolded their close-wrapped cones, and larkspurs, and lupins, lady's delights—plebeian manifestations of the pansy—self-sowing marigolds, hollyhocks, the forest flowers of two seasons, and the perennial lilacs and syringas—all whispered to the winds blowing over them that some caressing presence was around me.

Beyond the garden was 'the field,' a vast domain of four acres or thereabout, by the measurement of after years, bordered to the north by a fathomless chasm—the ditch the baseball players of the present era jump over ; on the east by unexplored territory ; on the south by a barren enclosure, where the red sorrel proclaimed liberty and equality under its *drapeau rouge*, and succeeded in establishing a vegetable commune where all were alike poor, mean, sour, and uninteresting ; and on the west by the Common, not then disgraced by jealous enclosures, which make it look like a cattle-market. Beyond, as I looked round,

were the Colleges, the meeting-house, the little square market-house, long vanished : the burial-ground where the dead Presidents stretched their weary bones under epitaphs stretched out at as full length as their subjects ; the pretty church where the gouty Tories used to kneel on their hassocks ; the district school-house, and hard by it Ma'am Hancock's cottage, never so called in those days, but rather 'ten-footer' ; then houses scattered near and far, open spaces, the shadowy elms, round hilltops in the distance, and over all the great bowl of the sky. Mind you, this was the WORLD, as I first knew it ; *terra veteribus cognita*, as Mr. Arrowsmith would have called it, if he had mapped the universe of my infancy.

But I am forgetting the old house again in the landscape. The worst of a modern stylish mansion is, that it has no place for ghosts. I watched one building not long since. It had no proper garret, to begin with, only a sealed interval between the roof and attics, where a spirit could not be accommodated, unless it were flattened out like Ravel, Brother, after the millstone had fallen on him. There was not a nook or a corner in the whole house fit to lodge any respectable ghost, for every part was as open to observation as a literary man's character and condition, his figure and estate, his coat and his countenance, are to his (or her) Bohemian Majesty on a tour of inspection through his (or her) subjects' keyholes.

Now the old house had wainscots, behind which the mice were always scampering and squeaking and rattling down the plaster, and enacting family scenes and parlour theatricals. It had a cellar where the cold slug clung to the walls, and the misanthropic spider withdrew from the garish day ; where the green mould loved to grow, and the long white potato-shoots went feeling along the floor, if haply they might find the daylight ; it had great brick pillars, always in a cold sweat with holding up the burden they had been aching under day and night for a century and more ; it had sepulchral arches closed by rough doors that hung on hinges rotten with rust, behind which doors, if there was not a heap of bones connected with a mysterious disappearance of long ago, there well might have been, for it was just the place to look for them. It had a garret, very nearly such a one as it seems to me one of us has described in one of his books ; but let us look at this one as I can reproduce it from memory. It has a flooring of laths with ridges of mortar squeezed up between them, which if you tread on you will go to—the Lord have mercy on you ! where *will* you go to ? the same being crossed by narrow bridges of boards, on which you may put your feet, but with fear and trembling. Above you and around you are beams and joists, on some of which you may see, when the light is let in, the marks of the conchoidal clippings of the broadaxe, showing the rude way in which the timber was shaped as it came,

full of sap, from the neighbouring forest. It is a realm of darkness and thick dust, and shroud-like cobwebs and dead things they wrap in their gray folds. For a garret is like a seashore, where wrecks are thrown up and slowly go to pieces. There is the cradle which the old man you just remember was rocked in ; there is the ruin of the bedstead he died on ; that ugly slanting contrivance used to be put under his pillow in the days when his breath came hard ; there is his old chair with both arms gone, symbol of the desolate time when he had nothing earthly left to lean on ; there is the large wooden reel which the blar-eyed old deacon sent the minister's lady, who thanked him graciously, and twirled it smilingly, and in fitting season bowed it out decently to the limbo of troublesome conveniences. And there are old leather portmanteaus, like stranded porpoises, their mouths gaping in gaunt hunger for the food with which they used to be gorged to bulging repletion ; and old brass and irons waiting until time shall revenge them on their paltry substitutes, and they shall have their own again, and bring with them the fore-stick and the back-log of ancient days ; and the empty churn, with its idle dasher, which the Nancys and the Phœbes, who have left their comfortable places to the Bridgets and Norahs, used to handle to good purpose ; and the brown, shaky old spinning-wheel, which was running, it may be, in the days when they were hanging the Salem witches.

Under the dark and haunted garret were attic chambers which themselves had histories. On a pane in the north-eastern chamber may be read these names : 'John Tracy,' 'Robert Roberts,' 'Thomas Prince' ; '*Stultus*,' another hand had added. When I found these names a few years ago (wrong side up, for the window had been reversed), I looked at once in the Triennial to find them, for the epithet showed that they were probably students. I found them all under the years 1771 and 1773. Does it please their thin ghosts thus to be dragged to the light of day ? Has '*Stultus*' forgiven the indignity of being thus characterised ?

The south-east chamber was the Library Hospital. Every scholar should have a book infirmary attached to his library. There should find a peaceable refuge the many books, invalids from their birth, which are sent 'with the best regards of the Author' ; the respected but unpresentable cripples which have lost a cover ; the odd volumes of honoured sets which go mourning all their days for their lost brother ; the school-books which have been so often the subjects of assault and battery, that they look as if the police-court must know them by heart ; these, and still more the pictured story-books, beginning with Mother Goose (which a dear old friend of mine has just been amusing his philosophic leisure with turning most ingeniously and happily into the tongues of Virgil and Homer) will be precious me-



mentos by-and-by, when children and grandchildren come along. What would I not give for that dear little paper-bound quarto, in large and most legible type, on certain pages of which the tender hand that was the shield of my infancy had crossed out with deep black marks something awful, probably about BEARS, such as once tare two-and-forty of us little folks for making faces, and the very name of which made us hide our heads under the bedclothes.

I made strange acquaintances in that book infirmary up in the south-west attic. The 'Negro Plot' at New York helped to implant a feeling in me which it took Mr. Garrison a good many years to root out. 'Thinks I to myself,' an old novel, which has been attributed to a famous statesman, introduced me to a world of fiction which was not represented on the shelves of the library proper, unless perhaps by 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife,' or allegories of the bitter tonic class, as the young doctor that sits on the other side of the table would probably call them. I always, from an early age, had a keen eye for a story with a moral sticking out of it, and gave it a wide berth, though in my later years I have myself written a couple of 'medicated novels,' as one of my dearest and pleasantest old friends wickedly called them, when somebody asked her if she had read the last of my printed performances. I forgave the satire for the charming *esprit* of the epithet. Besides the works I have mentioned, there was an old, old Latin alchemy book, with the manuscript annotations of some ancient Rosicrucian, in the pages of which I had a vague notion that I might find the mighty secret of the *Lapis Philosophorum*, otherwise called Chaos, the Dragon, the Green Lion, the *Quinta Essentia*, the Soap of Sages, the Vinegar of Philosophers, the Dew of Heavenly Grace, the Egg, the Old Man, the Sun, the Moon, and by all manner of odd aliases, as I am assured by the plethoric little book before me in parchment covers browned like a meerscham with the smoke of furnaces, and the thumbing of dead gold-seekers, and the fingering of bony-handed book-misers, and the long intervals of dusty slumber on the shelves of the *bouquiniste*; for next year it will be three centuries old, and it had already seen nine generations of men when I caught its eye (*Alchemiæ Doctrina*) and recognised it at pistol-shot distance as a prize, among the breviaries and *Heures* and trumpery volumes of the old open-air dealer who exposed his treasures under the shadow of St. Sulpice. I have never lost my taste for alchemy since I first got hold of the *Palladium Spagyricum* of Peter John Faber, and sought—in vain, it is true—through its pages for a clear, intelligible, and practical statement of how I could turn my lead sinkers and the weights of the tall kitchen clock into good yellow gold, specific gravity 19·2, and exchangeable for whatever I then wanted, and for many more things than I was then aware of. One of the

greatest pleasures of childhood is found in the mysteries which it hides from the scepticism of the elders, and works up into small mythologies of its own. I have seen all this played over again in adult life—the same delightful bewilderment of semi-emotional belief in listening to the gaseous promises of this or that fantastic system—that I found in the pleasing mirages conjured up for me by the ragged old volume I used to pore over in the south-east attic chamber.

The rooms of the second story, the chambers of birth and death, are sacred to silent memories.

Let us go down to the ground floor. I should have begun with this, but that the historical reminiscences of the old house have been recently told in a most interesting memoir by a distinguished student of our local history. I retain my doubts about those 'dents' on the floor of the right-hand room, 'the study' of successive occupants, said to have been made by the butts of the Continental militia's firelocks, but this was the cause the story told me in childhood laid them to. That military consultations were held in that room when the house was General Ward's headquarters, that the Provincial generals and colonels and other men of war there planned the movement which ended in the fortifying of Bunker's Hill, that Warren slept in the house the night before the battle, that President Langdon went forth from the western door and prayed for God's blessing on the men just setting forth on their bloody expedition—all these things have been told, and perhaps none of them need be doubted.

But now for fifty years and more that room has been a meeting-ground for the platoons and companies which range themselves at the scholar's word of command. Pleasant it is to think that the retreating host of books is to give place to a still larger army of volumes, which have seen service under the eye of a great commander. For here the noble collection of him so freshly remembered as our silver-tongued orator, our erudite scholar, our honoured College President, our accomplished statesman, our courtly ambassador, are to be reverently gathered by the heir of his name, himself not unworthy to be surrounded by that august assembly of the wise of all ages, and of various lands and languages.

Could such a many-chambered edifice have stood a century and a half and not have had its passages of romance to bequeath their lingering legends to the after-time? There are other names on some of the small window-panes, which must have had young flesh-and-blood owners, and there is one of early date which elderly persons have whispered was borne by a fair woman, whose graces made the house beautiful in the eyes of the youth of that time. One especially—you will find the name of Fontesne Vernon, of the class of 1780, in the Triennial Catalogue—was a favoured visitor to the old mansion; but he went

over seas, I think they told me, and died still young, and the name of the maiden which is scratched on the window-pane was never changed. I am telling the story honestly, as I remember it, but I may have coloured it unconsciously, and the legendary pane may be broken before this for aught I know. At least, I have named no names except the beautiful one of the supposed hero of the romantic story.

It was a great happiness to have been born in an old house haunted by such recollections, with harmless ghosts walking its corridors, with fields of waving grass and trees and singing birds, and that vast territory of four or five acres around it to give a child the sense that he was born to a noble principality. It has been a great pleasure to retain a certain hold upon it for so many years ; and since in the natural course of things it must at length pass into other hands, it is a gratification to see the old place making itself tidy for a new tenant, like some venerable dame who is getting ready to entertain a neighbour of condition. Not long since a new cap of shingles adorned this ancient mother among the village—now city—mansions. She has dressed herself in brighter colours than she has hitherto worn, so they tell me, within the last few days. She has modernised her aspect in several ways ; she has rubbed bright the glasses through which she looks at the Common and the Colleges ; and as the sunsets shine upon her through the flickering leaves or the wiry spray of the elms I remember from my childhood, they will glorify her into the aspect she wore when President Holyoke, father of our long since dead centenarian, looked upon her in her youthful comeliness.

The quiet corner formed by this and the neighbouring residences has changed less than any place I can remember. Our kindly, polite, shrewd, and humorous old neighbour, who in former days has served the town as constable and auctioneer, and who bids fair to become the oldest inhabitant of the city, was there when I was born, and is living there to-day. By-and-by the stony foot of the great University will plant itself on this whole territory, and the private recollections which clung so tenaciously and fondly to the place and its habitations will have died with those who cherished them.

Shall they ever live again in the memory of those who loved them here below ? What is this life without the poor accidents which made it our own, and by which we identify ourselves ? Ah me ! I might like to be a winged chorister, but still it seems to me I should hardly be quite happy if I could not recall at will the Old House with the Long Entry, and the White Chamber (where I wrote the first verses that made me known, with a pencil, *stans pede in uno*, pretty nearly), and the Little Parlour, and the Study, and the old books in uniforms as varied as those of the Ancient and Honourable Artillery Company used to be, if

my memory serves me right, and the front yard with the stars of Bethlehem growing, flowerless, among the grass, and the dear faces to be seen no more there or anywhere on this earthly place of farewells.

I have told my story. I do not know what special gifts have been granted or denied me ; but this I know, that I am like so many others of my fellow-creatures, that when I smile, I feel as if they must ; when I cry, I think their eyes fill ; and it always seems to me that when I am most truly myself, I come nearest to them and am surest of being listened to by the brothers and sisters of the larger family into which I was born so long ago. I have often feared they might be tired of me and what I tell them. But then, perhaps, would come a letter from some quiet body in some out-of-the-way place, which showed me that I had said something which another had often felt but never said, or told the secret of another's heart in unburdening my own. Such evidences that one is in the highway of human experience and feeling lighten the footsteps wonderfully. So it is that one is encouraged to go on writing as long as the world has anything that interests him, for he never knows how many of his fellow-beings he may please or profit, and in how many places his name will be spoken as that of a friend.

In the mood suggested by my story I have ventured on the poem that follows. Most people love this world more than they are willing to confess, and it is hard to conceive ourselves weaned from it so as to feel no emotion at the thought of its most sacred recollections—even after a sojourn of years, as we should count the lapse of earthly time—in the realm where, sooner or later, all tears shall be wiped away. I hope, therefore, the title of my lines will not frighten those who are little accustomed to think of men and women as human beings in any state but the present.

### HOMESICK IN HEAVEN.

Go seek thy earth-born sisters—thus the Voice  
That all obey—the sad and silent three ;  
These only, while the hosts of Heaven rejoice,  
Smile never : ask them what their sorrows be :

And when the secret of their griefs they tell,  
Look on them with thy mild, half-human eyes ;  
Say what thou wast on earth ; thou knowest well ;  
So shall they cease from unavailing sighs.

'Why thus, apart,' the swift-winged herald spake,—  
'Sit ye with silent lips and unstrung lyres  
While the trisagion's blending chorals wake  
In shouts of joy from all the heavenly choirs?'

'Chide not thy sisters,' thus the answer came ;—  
'Children of earth, our half weaned nature clings

To earth's fond memories, and her whispered name  
 Untunes our quivering lips, our saddened strings ;

' For there we loved, and where we love is home,  
 Home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts,  
 Though o'er us shine the jasper-lighted dome :—  
 The chain may lengthen, but it never parts !

' Sometimes a sunlit sphere comes rolling by,  
 And then we softly whisper,—*can it be ?*  
 And leaning toward the silvery orb, we try  
 To hear the music of its murmuring sea ;

' To catch, perchance, some flashing glimpse of green  
 Or breathe some wild-wood fragrance, wafted through  
 The opening gates of pearl, that fold between  
 The blinding splendours and the changeless blue.'

' Nay, sister, nay ! a single healing leaf  
 Plucked from the bough of yon twelve-fruited tree,  
 Would soothe such anguish—deeper stabbing grief  
 Has pierced thy throbbing heart—'  
 ' Ah, woe is me !

' I from my clinging babe was rudely torn ;  
 His tender lips a loveless bosom pressed ;  
 Can I forget him in my life new born ?  
 O that my darling lay upon my breast !'

' And thou ?'  
 ' I was a fair and youthful bride,  
 The kiss of love still burns upon my cheek,  
 He whom I worshipped, ever at my side.  
 Him through the spirit realm in vain I seek.

' Sweet faces turn their beaming eyes on mine !  
 Ah ! not in these the wished-for look I read ;  
 Still for that one dear human smile I pine,  
*Thou and none other !—is the lover's creed.*'

' And whence *thy* sadness in a world of bliss  
 Where never parting comes, nor mourner's tear ?  
 Art thou, too, dreaming of a mortal's kiss  
 Amid the seraphs of the heavenly sphere ?'

' Nay, tax not me with passion's wasting fire ;  
 When the swift message set my spirit free,  
 Blind, helpless, lone I left my gray-haired sire ;  
 My friends were many, he had none save me.

' I left him, orphaned, in the starless night ;  
 Alas, for him no cheerful morning's dawn !  
 I wear the ransomed spirit's robe of white,  
 Yet still I hear him moaning, *She is gone !*

' Ye know me not, sweet sisters ?—All in vain  
 Ye seek your lost ones in the shapes they wore ;  
 The flower once opened may not bud again,  
 The fruit once fallen finds the stem no more.

' Child, lover, sire,—yea, all things loved below—  
 Fair pictures damasked on a vapour's fold—  
 Fade like the roseate flush, the golden glow,  
 When the bright curtain of the day is rolled.

- ‘ I was the babe that slumbered on *thy* breast.  
And, sister, mine the lips that called *thee* bride.  
Mine were the silvered locks *thy* hand caressed,  
That faithful hand, my faltering footsteps’ guide !
- ‘ Each changing form, frail vesture of decay,  
The soul unclad forgets it once hath worn,  
Stained with the travel of the weary day,  
And shamed with rents from every wayside thorn.
- ‘ To lie, an infant, in *thy* fond embrace,—  
To come with love’s warm kisses back to *thee*—  
To show *thine* eyes thy gray-haired father’s face,  
Not Heaven itself could grant ; this may not be !
- ‘ Then spread your folded wings, and leave to earth  
The dust once breathing ye have mourned so long,  
Till Love, new risen, owns his heavenly birth,  
And sorrow’s discord sweeten into song !

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## II.

I AM going to take it for granted now and henceforth, in my report of what was said and what was to be seen at our table, that I have secured one good, faithful, loving reader, who never finds fault, who never gets sleepy over my pages, whom no critic can bully out of a liking for me, and to whom I am always safe in addressing myself. My one elect may be man or woman, old or young, gentle or simple, living in the next block or on a slope of Nevada, my fellow-countryman or an alien ; but one such reader I shall assume to exist and have always in my thought when I am writing.

A writer is so like a lover ! And a talk with the right listener is so like an arm-in-arm walk in the moonlight with the soft heartbeat just felt through the folds of muslin and broadcloth ! But it takes very little to spoil everything for writer, talker, lover. There are a great many cruel things besides poverty that freeze the genial current of the soul, as the poet of the *Elegy* calls it. Fire can stand any wind, but flame is easily blown out, and then come smouldering and smoke, and profitless, slow combustion without the cheerful blaze which shed light all round it. The One Reader’s hand may shelter the flame ; the one blessed ministering spirit with the vessel of oil may keep it bright in spite of the stream of cold water on the other side doing its best to put it out.

I suppose, if any writer, of any distinguishable individuality, could look into the hearts of all his readers, he might very probably find one in his parish of a thousand or a million who honestly preferred him to any other of his kind. I have no doubt we have each one of us, somewhere, our exact fac-simile,

so like us in all things except the accident of condition, that we should love each other like a pair of twins, if our natures could once fairly meet. I know I have my counterpart in some State of this Union. I feel sure that there is an Englishman somewhere precisely like myself. (I hope he does not drop his *h's*, for it does not seem to me possible that the royal Dane could have remained faithful to his love for Ophelia, if she had addressed him as 'Amlet'). There is also a certain Monsieur, to me at this moment unknown, and likewise a Herr Von Something, each of whom is essentially my double. An Arab is at this moment eating dates, a Mandarin is just sipping his tea, and a South Sea Islander (with undeveloped possibilities) drinking the milk of a cocoa-nut, each one of whom, if he had been born in the gambrel-roofed house, and cultivated my little sand-patch, and grown up in 'the Study' from the height of Walton's Polyglot Bible to that of the shelf which held the Elzevir Tacitus and Casaubon's Polybius, with all the complex influences about him that surrounded me, would have been so nearly what I am that I should have loved him like a brother—always provided that I did not hate him for his resemblance to me, on the same principle as that which makes bodies in the same electric condition repel each other.

For, perhaps, after all, my One Reader is quite as like to be not the person most resembling myself, but the one to whom my nature is complementary. Just as a particular soil wants some one element to fertilize it, just as the body in some conditions has a kind of famine for one special food, so the mind has its wants, which do not always call for what is best, but which know themselves, and are as peremptory as the salt-sick sailor's call for a lemon or a raw potato, or, if you will, as those capricious 'longings,' which have a certain meaning, we may suppose, and which at any rate we think it reasonable to satisfy if we can.

I was going to say something about our boarders the other day, when I got run away with by my local reminiscences. I wish you to understand that we have a rather select company at the table of our boarding-house.

Our Landlady is a most respectable person, who has seen better days, of course—all landladies have—but has also, I feel sure, seen a good deal worse ones. For she wears a very handsome silk dress on state occasions, with a breastpin set, as I honestly believe, with genuine pearls, and appears habitually with a very smart cap, from under which her grey curls come out with an unmistakable expression, conveyed in the hieratic language of the feminine priesthood, to the effect that while there is life there is hope. And when I come to reflect on the many circumstances which go to the making of matrimonial



happiness, I cannot help thinking that a personage of her presentable exterior, thoroughly experienced in all the domestic arts which render life comfortable, might make the later years of some hitherto companionless bachelor very endurable, not to say pleasant.

The condition of the Landlady's family is, from what I learn, such as to make the connection I have alluded to, I hope with delicacy, desirable for incidental as well as direct reasons, provided a fitting match could be found. I was startled at hearing her address by the familiar name of *Benjamin* the young physician I have referred to, until I found on inquiry, what I might have guessed by the size of his slices of pie and other little marks of favouritism, that he was her son. He had recently come back from Europe, where he has topped off his home training with a first-class foreign finish. As the landlady could never have educated him in this way out of the profits of keeping boarders, I was not surprised when I was told that she had received a pretty little property in the form of a bequest from a former boarder, a very kind-hearted, worthy old gentleman, who had been long with her and seen how hard she worked for food and clothes for herself and this son of hers, Benjamin Franklin by his baptismal name. Her daughter had also married well, to a member of what we may call the post-medical profession, that, namely, which deals with the mortal frame after the practitioners of the healing art have done with it and taken their leave. So thriving had this son-in-law of hers been in this business, that his wife drove about in her own carriage, drawn by a pair of jet-black horses of most dignified demeanour, whose only fault was a tendency to relapse at once into a walk after every application of a stimulus that quickened their pace to a trot ; which application always caused them to look round upon the driver with a surprised and offended air, as if he had been guilty of a grave indecorum.

The Landlady's daughter had been blessed with a number of children, of great sobriety of outward aspect, but remarkably cheerful in their inward habit of mind, more especially on the occasion of the death of a doll, which was an almost daily occurrence, and gave them immense delight in getting up a funeral, for which they had a complete miniature outfit. How happy they were under their solemn aspect ! For the head mourner, a child of remarkable gifts, could actually make the tears run down her cheeks—as real ones as if she had been a grown person following a rich relative, who had not forgotten his connections, to his last unfurnished lodgings.

So this was a most desirable family connection for the right man to step into—a thriving, thrifty mother-in-law, who knew what was good for the sustenance of the body, and had no doubt taught it to her daughter ; a medical artist at hand in case the

luxuries of the table should happen to disturb the physiological harmonies ; and in the worst event, a sweet consciousness that the last sad offices would be attended to with affectionate zeal, and probably a large discount from the usual charges.

It seems as if I could hardly be at this table for a year, if I should stay so long, without seeing some romance or other work itself out under my eyes ; and I cannot help thinking that the Landlady is to be the heroine of the love-history like to unfold itself. I think I see the little cloud in the horizon, with a silvery lining to it, which may end in a rain of cards tied round with white ribbons. Extremes meet, and who so like to be the other party as the elderly gentleman at the other end of the table, as far from her now as the length of the board permits ? I may be mistaken, but I think this is to be the romantic episode of the year before me. Only it seems so natural it is improbable, for you never find your dropped money just where you look for it, and so it is with these *à priori* matches.

This gentleman is a tight, tidy, wiry little man, with a small, brisk head, close-cropped white hair, a quiet, rather kindly face, quick in his movements, neat in his dress, but fond of wearing a short jacket over his coat, which gives him the look of a pickled or preserved school-boy. He has retired, they say, from a snug business, with a snug property, suspected by some to be rather more than snug, and entitling him to be called a capitalist, except that this word seems to be equivalent to highway robber in the new gospel of Saint Petroleum. That he is economical in his habits cannot be denied, for he saws and splits his own wood—for exercise, he says—and makes his own fires, brushes his own shoes, and, it is whispered, darns a hole in a stocking now and then—all for exercise, I suppose. Every summer he goes out of town for a few weeks. On a given day of the month a waggon stops at the door and takes up, not his trunks, for he does not indulge in any such extravagance, but the stout brown linen bags in which he packs the few conveniences he carries with him.

I do not think this worthy and economical personage will have much to do or to say, unless he marries the Landlady. If he does that, he will play a part of some importance—but I don't feel sure at all. His talk is little in amount, and generally ends in some compact formula condensing much wisdom in few words, as that *a man should not put all his eggs in one basket ; that there are as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it ;* and one in particular, which he surprised me by saying in pretty good French one day, to the effect that *the inheritance of the world belongs to the phlegmatic people*, which seems to me to have a good deal of truth in it.

The other elderly personage, the old man with iron-gray hair and large round spectacles, sits at my right at the table. He is

a retired college officer, a man of books and observation, and himself an author. *Magister Artium* is one of his titles on the college catalogue, and I like best to speak of him as the Master, because he has a certain air of authority which none of us feel inclined to dispute. He has given me a copy of a work of his which seems to me not wanting in suggestiveness, and which I hope I shall be able to make some use of in my records by-and-by. I said the other day that he had good solid prejudices, which is true, and I like him none the worse for it ; but he has also opinions more or less original, valuable, probable, fanciful ; fantastic, or whimsical, perhaps now and then ; which he promulgates at table somewhat in the tone of imperial edicts. Another thing I like about him is, that he takes a certain intelligent interest in pretty much everything that interests other people. I asked him the other day what he thought most about in his wide range of studies.

'Sir,' said he, 'I take stock in everything that concerns anybody. *Humani nihil*—you know the rest. But if you ask me what is my specialty, I should say I applied myself more particularly to the contemplation of the Order of Things.'

'A pretty wide subject,' I ventured to suggest.

'Not wide enough, sir—not wide enough to satisfy the desire of a mind which wants to get at absolute truth, without reference to the empirical arrangements of our particular planet and its environments. I want to subject the formal conditions of space and time to a new analysis, and project a possible universe outside of the Order of Things. But I have narrowed myself by studying the actual facts of being. By-and-by—by-and-by—perhaps—perhaps. I hope to do some sound thinking in heaven—if I ever get there,' he said seriously, and it seemed to me not irreverently.

'I rather like that,' I said. 'I think you telescopic people are, on the whole, more satisfactory than your microscopic ones.'

My left-hand neighbour fidgeted about a little in his chair as I said this. But the young man sitting not far from the landlady, to whom my attention had been attracted by the expression of his eyes, which seemed as if they saw nothing before him, but looked beyond everything—smiled a sort of faint starlight smile, that touched me strangely ; for until that moment he had appeared as if his thoughts were far away, and I had been questioning whether he had lost friends lately, or perhaps had never had them, he seemed so remote from our boarding-house life. I will inquire about him, for he interests me, and I thought he seemed interested as I went on talking.

'No,' I continued ; 'I don't want to have the territory of a man's mind fenced in. I don't want to shut out the mystery of the stars and the awful hollow that holds them. We have done

with those hypæthral temples, that were open above to the heavens, but we can have attics and skylights to them. Minds with skylights—yes—stop, let us see if we can't get something out of that.

'One-story intellects, two-story intellects, three-story intellects with skylights. All fact-collectors, who have no aim beyond their facts, are one-story men. Two-story men compare, reason, generalise, using the labours of the fact-collectors as well as their own. Three-story men idealize, imagine, predict; their best illumination comes from above, through the skylight. There are minds with large ground-floors, that can store an infinite amount of knowledge; some librarians, for instance, who know enough of books to help other people, without being able to make much other use of their knowledge, have intellects of this class. Your great working lawyer has two spacious stories; his mind is clear, because his mental floors are large, and he has room to arrange his thoughts so that he can get at them—facts below, principles above, and all in ordered series. Poets are often narrow below, incapable of clear statement, and with small power of consecutive reasoning, but full of light, if sometimes rather bare of furniture, in the attics.'

The Old Master smiled. I think he suspects himself of a three-story intellect, and I don't feel sure that he isn't right.

'Is it dark meat or white meat you will be helped to?' said the landlady, addressing the Master.

'Dark meat for me always,' he answered. Then, turning to me, he began one of those monologues of his, such as that which put the Member of the House asleep the other day.

'It's pretty much the same in men and women and in books and everything, that it is in turkeys and chickens. Why, take your poets, now—say Browning and Tennyson. Don't you think you can say which is the dark meat and which is the white meat poet? And so of the people you know: can't you pick out the full-flavoured, coarse-fibred characters from the delicate, fine-fibred ones? And in the same person, don't you know the same two shades in different parts of the character that you find in the wing and thigh of a partridge? I suppose you poets may like white meat best—very probably; you had rather have a wing than a drumstick, I dare say.'

'Why, yes,' said I, 'I suppose some of us do. Perhaps it is because a bird flies with his white-fleshed limbs and walks with the dark-fleshed ones. Besides, the wing-muscles are nearer the heart than the leg-muscles.'

I thought that sounded mighty pretty, and paused a moment to pat myself on the back, as is my wont when I say something that I think of superior quality. So I lost my innings; for the Master is apt to strike in at the end of a bar, instead of waiting

for a rest, if I may borrow a musical phrase. No matter, just at this moment, what he said ; but he talked the Member of the House asleep again.

They have a new term nowadays (I am speaking to you, the Reader) for people that do a good deal of talking ; they call them 'conversationists,' or 'conversationalists ;' talkists, I suppose, would do just as well. It is rather dangerous to get the name of being one of these phenomenal manifestations, as one is expected to say something remarkable every time one opens one's mouth in company. It seems hard not to be able to ask for a piece of bread or a tumbler of water, without a sensation running round the table, as if one were an electric eel or a torpedo, and couldn't be touched without giving a shock. A fellow isn't all battery, is he ? The idea that a *Gymnotus* can't swallow his worm without a coruscation of animal lightning, is hard on that brilliant but sensational being. Good talk is not a matter of will at all ; it depends—you know we are all half materialists nowadays—on a certain amount of active congestion of the brain, and that comes when it is ready, and not before. I saw a man get up the other day in a pleasant company, and talk away for about five minutes, evidently by a pure effort of will. His person was good, his voice was pleasant, but anybody could see that it was all mechanical labour ; he was sparring for wind, as the Hon. John Morrissey, M.C., would express himself. Presently—

Do you—Beloved, I am afraid you are not old enough—but *do* you remember the days of the tin tinder-box, the flint and steel ? Click ! click ! click !—Ah-h-h ! knuckles that time ! click ! click ! CLICK ! a spark has taken, and is eating into the black tinder, as a six-year-old eats into a sheet of gingerbread.

Presently, after hammering away for his five minutes with mere words, the spark of a happy expression took somewhere among the mental combustibles, and then for ten minutes we had a pretty, wandering, scintillating play of eloquent thought, that enlivened, if it did not kindle, all around it. If you want the real philosophy of it, I will give it to you. The chance thought or expression struck the nervous centre of consciousness, as the rowel of a spur stings the flank of a racer. Away through all the telegraphic radiations of the nervous cords flashed the intelligence that the brain was kindling, and must be fed with something or the other, or it would burn itself to ashes. And all the great hydraulic engines poured in their scarlet blood, and the fire kindled, and the flame rose ; for the blood is a stream that like burning rock-oil, at once kindles, and is itself the fuel. You can't order these organic processes, any more than a milliner can make a rose. She can make something that *looks* like a rose, more or less, but it takes all the forces of the universe to finish and sweeten that blossom in your button-hole ; and you

may be sure that when the orator's brain is in a flame, when the poet's heart is in a tumult, it is something mightier than he and his will that is dealing with him ! As I have looked from one of the northern windows of the street which commands our noble estuary—the view through which is a picture on an illimitable canvas and a poem in innumerable cantos—I have sometimes seen a pleasure-boat drifting along, her sail flapping, and she seeming as if she had neither will nor aim. At her stern a man was labouring to bring her head round with an oar, to little purpose, as it seemed to those who watched him pulling and tugging. But all at once the wind of heaven, which had wandered all the way from Florida or from Labrador, it may be, struck full upon the sail, and it swelled and rounded itself like a white bosom that had burst its bodice, and—

You are right ; it is too true ! but how I love these pretty phrases ! I am afraid I am becoming an epicure in words, which is a bad thing to be, unless it is denominated by something infinitely better than itself. But there is a fascination in the mere sound of articulated breath ; of consonants that resist with the firmness of a maid of honour, or half or wholly yield to the wooing lips ; of vowels that flow and murmur, each after its kind ; the peremptory *b* and *p*, the brittle *k*, the vibrating *r*, the insinuating *s*, the feathery *f*, the velvety *v*, the bell-voiced *m*, the tranquil broad *a*, the penetrating *e*, the cooing *u*, the emotional *o*, and the beautiful combinations of alternate rock and stream, as it were, that they give to the rippling flow of speech—there is a fascination in the skilful handling of these, which the great poets and even prose-writers have not disdained to acknowledge and use to recommend their thought. What do you say to this line of Homer as a piece of poetical full-band music ? I know you read the Greek characters with perfect ease, but permit me, just for my own satisfaction, to put it into English letters :—

Aiglē pamphanoösa di' aitheros ouranon ike !

as if he should have spoken in our poorer phrase of,

Splendour far shining through ether to heaven ascending.

That Greek line, which I do not remember having heard mention of as remarkable, has nearly every consonantal and vowel sound in the language. Try it by the Greek and by the English alphabet ; it is a curiosity. Tell me that old Homer did not roll his sightless eyeballs about with delight, as he thundered out these ringing syllables ! It seems hard to think of his going round like a hand-organ man, with such music and such thought as his to earn his bread with. One can't help wishing that Mr. Pugh could have got at him for a single lecture, at least, of the ' Star Course,' or that he could have appeared in the Music Hall, ' for this night only.'

I know I have rambled, but I hope you see this is a delicate way of letting you into the nature of the individual who is, officially, the principal personage at our table. It would hardly do to describe him directly, you know. But you must not think, because the lightning zigzags, it does not know where to strike.

I shall try to go through the rest of my description of our boarders with as little of digression as is consistent with my nature. I think we have a somewhat exceptional company. Since our landlady has got up in the world, her board has been decidedly a favourite with persons a little above the average in point of intelligence and education. In fact, ever since a boarder of hers, not wholly unknown to the reading public, brought her establishment into notice, it has attracted a considerable number of literary and scientific people, and now and then a politician, like the Member of the House of Representatives, otherwise called the Great and General Court of the State of Massachusetts. The consequence is, that there is more individuality of character than in a good many similar boarding-houses, where all are business men, engrossed in the same pursuit of money-making, or all are engaged in politics, and so deeply occupied with the welfare of the community that they can think and talk of little else.

At my left hand sits as singular-looking a human being as I remember seeing outside of a regular museum or tent-show. His black coat shines as if it had been polished; and it has been polished on the wearer's back, no doubt, for the arms and other points of maximum attrition are particularly smooth and bright. Round shoulders—stooping over some minute labour, I suppose. Very slender limbs, with bends like a grasshopper's; sits a great deal, I presume; looks as if he might straighten them out all of a sudden, and jump instead of walking. Wears goggles very commonly; says it rests his eyes, which he strains in looking at very small objects. Voice has a dry creak, as if made by some small piece of mechanism that wanted oiling. I don't think he is a botanist, for he does not smell of dried herbs, but carries a camphorated atmosphere about with him, as if to keep the moths from attacking him. I must find out what is his particular interest. One ought to know something about his immediate neighbours at the table. This is what I said to myself, before opening a conversation with him. Everybody in our ward of the city was in a great stir about a certain election, and I thought I might as well begin with that as anything.

How do you think the vote is like to go to-morrow? I said.

'It isn't to-morrow,' he said, 'it's next month.'

'Next month?' said I. 'Why, what election do you mean?'

'I mean the election to the Presidency of the Entomological Society, sir,' he creaked, with an air of surprise, as if nobody



could by any possibility have been thinking of any other. 'Great competition, sir, between the dipterists and the lepidopterists as to which shall get in their candidate. Several close ballotings already ; adjourned for a fortnight. Poor concerns, both of 'em. Wait till our turn comes.

'I suppose you are an entomologist?' I said, with a note of interrogation.

'Not quite so ambitious as that, sir. I should like to put my eyes on the individual entitled to that name ! A *society* may call itself an Entomological Society, but the man who arrogates such a broad title as that to himself, in the present state of science, is a pretender, sir, a dilettante, an impostor ! No man can be truly called an entomologist, sir ; the subject is too vast for any single human intelligence to grasp.'

'May I venture to ask,' I said, a little awed by his statement and manner, 'what is your special province of study ?'

'I am often spoken of as a Coleopterist,' he said, 'but I have no right to so comprehensive a name. The genus *Scarabæus* is what I have chiefly confined myself to, and ought to have studied exclusively. The beetles proper are quite enough for the labour of one man's life. Call me a Scarabeeist if you will ; if I can prove myself worthy of that name, my highest ambition will be more than satisfied.'

I think, by way of compromise and convenience, I shall call him the Scarabee. He has come to look wonderfully like those creatures—the beetles, I mean—by being so much among them. His room is hung round with cases of them, each impaled on a pin driven through him, something as they used to bury suicides. These cases take the place for him of pictures and all other ornaments. That Boy steals into his room sometimes, and stares at them with great admiration, and has himself undertaken to form a rival cabinet, chiefly consisting of flies, so far, arranged in ranks superintended by an occasional spider.

The Old Master, who is a bachelor, has a kindly feeling for this little monkey, and those of his kind.

'I like children,' he said to me one day at table. 'I like 'em, and I respect 'em. Pretty much all the honest truth-telling there is in the world is done by them. Do you know they play the part in the household which the king's jester, who very often had a mighty long head under his cap and bells, used to play for a monarch ? There's no radical club like a nest of little folks in a nursery. Did you ever watch a baby's fingers ? I have often enough, though I never knew what it was to own one.' The Master paused half a minute or so, sighed, perhaps at thinking what he had missed in life—looked up at me a little vacantly. I saw what was the matter ; he had lost the thread of his talk.

'Baby's fingers,' I intercalated.

'Yes, yes ; did you ever see how they will poke those wonder-



ful little fingers of theirs into every fold and crack and crevice they can get at? That is their first education, feeling their way into the solid facts of the material world. When they begin to talk it is the same thing over again in another shape. If there is a crack or a flaw in your answer to their confounded shoulder-hitting questions, they will poke and poke until they have got it gaping, just as the baby's fingers have made a rent out of that atom of a hole in his pinafore that your old eyes never took notice of. Then they make such fools of us by copying on a small scale what we do in the grand manner. I wonder if it ever occurs to our dried-up neighbour there to ask himself whether That Boy's collection of flies isn't about as significant in the Order of Things as his own Museum of Beetles.'

I couldn't help thinking that perhaps That Boy's questions about the simpler mysteries of life might have a good deal of the same kind of significance as the Master's inquiries into the Order of Things.

On my left, beyond my next neighbour the Scarabee, at the end of the table, sits a person of whom we know little, except that he carries about him more palpable reminiscences of tobacco and the allied sources of comfort than a very sensitive organization might find acceptable. The Master does not seem to like him much, for some reason or other—perhaps he has a special aversion to the odour of tobacco. As his forefinger shows a little too distinctly that he uses a pen, I shall compliment him by calling him the Man of Letters, until I find out more about him.

The Young Girl who sits on my right, next beyond the Master, can hardly be more than nineteen or twenty years old. I wish I could paint her so as to interest others as much as she does me. But she has not a profusion of sunny tresses wreathing a neck of alabaster, and the cheek where the rose and the lily are trying to settle their old quarrel with alternating victory. Her hair is brown, her cheek is delicately pallid, her forehead is too ample for a ball-room beauty's. A single faint line between the eyebrows is the record of long-continued anxious efforts to please in the task she has chosen, or rather which has been forced upon her. It is the same line of anxious and conscientious effort, which I saw not long since on the forehead of one of the sweetest and truest singers who has visited us; the same which is so striking on the masks of singing women carved upon the façade of our Great Organ—that Himalayan home of harmony which you are to see and then die, if you don't live where you can see and hear it often. Many deaths have happened in a neighbouring large city from that well-known complaint, *Icterus Invidiosorum*, after returning from a visit to the Music Hall. The invariable symptom of a fatal attack is the *Risus Sardonicus*. But

the Young Girl. She gets her living by writing stories for a newspaper. Every week she furnishes a new story. If her head aches or her heart is heavy, so that she does not come to time with her story, she falls behind-hand and has to live on credit. It sounds well enough to say that 'she supports herself by her pen,' but her lot is a trying one; it repeats the doom of the Danaïdes. The *Weekly Bucket* has no bottom, and it is her business to help fill it. Imagine for one moment what it is to tell a tale that must flow on, flow ever, without pausing; the lover miserable and happy this week, to begin miserable again next week and end as before; the villain scowling, plotting, punished; to scowl, plot and get punished again in our next; an endless series of woes and blisses, into each paragraph of which the forlorn artist has to throw all the liveliness, all the emotion, all the graces of style she is mistress of, for the wages of a maid-of-all-work, and no more recognition or thanks from anybody than the apprentice who sets the types for the paper that prints her ever-ending and ever-beginning stories. And yet she has a pretty talent, sensibility, a natural way of writing, an ear for the music of verse in which she sometimes indulges to vary the dead monotony of everlasting narrative, and a sufficient amount of invention to render her stories readable. I have found my eyes dimmed over them oftener than once, more with thinking about her, perhaps, than about her heroes and heroines. Poor little body! Poor little mind! Poor little soul! She is one of that great company of delicate, intelligent, emotional young creatures, who are waiting, like that sail I spoke of, for some breath of heaven to fill their white bosoms—love, the right of every woman; religious emotion, sister of love, with the same passionate eyes, but cold, thin, bloodless hands—some enthusiasm of humanity or divinity; and find that life offers them, instead, a seat of a wooden bench, a chain to fasten them to it, and a heavy oar to pull day and night. We read the Arabian tales and pity the doomed lady who must amuse her lord and master from day to day or have her head cut off; how much better is a mouth without bread to fill it than no mouth at all to fill, because no head? We have all round us a weary-eyed company of Scheherazades! This is one of them, and I may call her by that name when it pleases me to do so.

The next boarder I have to mention is the one who sits between the Young Girl and the Landlady. In a little chamber where a small thread of sunshine finds its way for half an hour or so every day during a month or six weeks of the spring or autumn, at all other times obliged to content itself with ungilded daylight, lives this boarder, whom, without wronging any others of our company, I may call, as she is very generally called in the household, *The Lady*. In giving her this name it is not meant

that there are no other ladies at our table, or that the handmaids who serve us are not ladies, or to deny the general proposition that everybody who wears the unbifurcated garment is entitled to that appellation. Only this lady has a look and manner which there is no mistaking as belonging to a person always accustomed to refined and elegant society. Her style is perhaps a little more courtly and gracious than some would like. The language and manner which betray the habitual desire of pleasing, and which add a charm to intercourse in the higher social circles, are liable to be construed by sensitive beings unused to such amenities as an odious condescension when addressed to persons of less consideration than the accused, and as a still more odious—you know the word—when directed to those who are esteemed by the world as considerable personages. But of all this the accused are fortunately wholly unconscious, for there is nothing so entirely natural and unaffected as the highest breeding.

From an aspect of dignified but undisguised economy, which showed itself in her dress as well as in her limited quarters, I suspected a story of shipwrecked fortune, and determined to question our Landlady. That worthy woman was delighted to tell the history of her most distinguished boarder. She was, as I had supposed, a gentlewoman whom a change of circumstances had brought down from her high estate.

Did I know the Goldenrod family?—Of course I did.—Well, the Lady was first cousin to Mrs. Midas Goldenrod. She had been here in her carriage to call upon her—not very often.—Were her rich relations kind and helpful to her?—Well—yes; at least they made her presents now and then. Three or four years ago they sent her a silver waiter, and every Christmas they sent her a bōquet—it must cost as much as five dollars, the Landlady thought.

‘And how did the Lady receive these valuable and useful gifts?’

‘Every Christmas she got out the silver waiter, and borrowed a glass tumbler and filled it with water, and put the bōquet in it and set it on the waiter. It smelt sweet enough and looked pretty for a day or two,’ but the landlady thought ‘it wouldn’t have hurt ’em if they’d sent a piece of goods for a dress, or, at least, a pocket-handkercher or two, or something or other that she could ’a’ made some kind of use of; but beggars mustn’t be choosers; not that she was a beggar, for she’d sooner die than do that if she was in want of a meal of victuals. There was a lady I remember, and she had a little boy and she was a widow, and after she’d buried her husband she was dreadful poor, and she was ashamed to let her little boy go out in his old shoes, and coppered-toed shoes they was too, because his poor little toes—was a coming out of ’em; and what do you think my

husband's rich uncle—well, there now, it was me and my little Benjamin, as he was then, there's no use in hiding of it—and what do you think my husband's rich uncle sent me but a plaster of Paris image of a young woman, that was—well, her appearance wasn't respectable, and I had to take and wrap her up in a towel and poke her right into my closet, and there she stayed till she got her head broke and served her right, for she wasn't fit to show folks. You needn't say anything about what I told you, but the fact is I was desperate poor before I began to support myself taking boarders, and a lone woman without her—her—

The sentence plunged into the gulf of her great remembered sorrow, and was lost in the records of humanity.

Presently, she continued, in answer to my questions : 'The Lady was not very sociable—kept mostly to herself. The Young Girl (our Scheherazade) used to visit her sometimes, and they seemed to like each other, but the Young Girl had not many spare hours for visiting. The Lady never found fault, but she was very nice in her tastes, and kept everything about her looking as neat and pleasant as she could.'

'What did she do?'—'Why, she read, and she drew pictures, and she did needle-work patterns, and played on an old harp she had ; the gilt was mostly off, but it sounded very sweet, and she sung to it sometimes, those old songs that used to be in fashion twenty or thirty years ago, with words to 'em that folks could understand.'

'Did she do anything to help support herself?'—The landlady couldn't say she did, but she thought there was rich people enough that ought to buy the flowers and things she worked and painted.

All this points to the fact that she was bred to be an ornamental rather than what is called a useful member of society. This is all very well as long as fortune favours those who are chosen to be the ornamental personages ; but if the golden tide recedes and leaves them stranded, they are more to be pitied than almost any other class. 'I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.'

I think it is unpopular in this country to talk much about gentlemen and gentlewomen. People are touchy about social distinctions, which no doubt are often invidious and quite arbitrary and accidental, but which it is impossible to avoid recognising as facts of natural history. Society stratifies itself everywhere, and the stratum which is generally recognised as the uppermost will be apt to have the advantage in easy grace of manner and in unassuming confidence, and consequently be more agreeable in the superficial relations of life. To compare these advantages with the virtues and utilities would be foolish. *Much* of the noblest work in life is done by ill-dressed, awkward,

ungainly persons ; but that is no more reason for undervaluing good manners and what we call high-breeding, than the fact that the best part of the sturdy labour of the world is done by men with exceptionable hands is to be urged against the use of Brown Windsor as a preliminary to appearance in cultivated society.

I mean to stand up for this poor lady, whose usefulness in the world is apparently problematical. She seems to me like a picture that has fallen from its gilded frame and lies, face downward, on the dusty floor. The picture never was as needful as a window or a door, but it was pleasant to see it in its place, and it would be pleasant to see it there again, and I, for one, should be thankful to have the Lady restored by some turn of fortune to the position from which she has been so cruelly cast down.

I have asked the Landlady about the young man sitting near her, the same who attracted my attention the other day while I was talking, as I mentioned. He passes most of his time in a private observatory, it appears ; a watcher of the stars. That I suppose gives the peculiar look to his lustrous eyes. The Master knows him, and was pleased to tell me something about him.

‘You call yourself a Poet,’ he said, ‘and we call you so, too, and so you are ; I read your verses and like ’em. But that young man lives in a world beyond the imagination of poets, let me tell you. The daily home of his thought is in illimitable space, hovering between the two eternities. In his contemplations the divisions of time run together, as in the thought of his Maker. With him also—I say it not profanely—one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.’

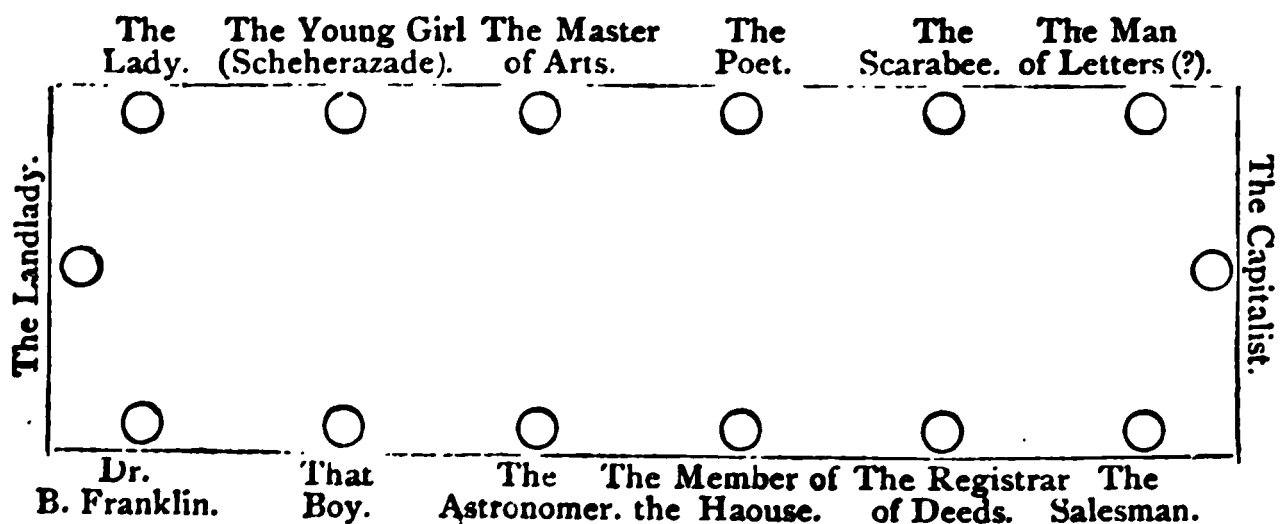
This account of his occupation increased the interest his look had excited in me, and I have observed him more particularly and found out more about him. Sometimes, after a long night’s watching, he looks so pale and worn, that one would think the cold moonlight had stricken him with some malign effluence, such as it is fabled to send upon those who sleep in it. At such times he seems more like one who has come from a planet farther away from the sun than our earth, than like one of us terrestrial creatures. His home is truly in the heavens, and he practises an asceticism in the cause of science almost comparable to that of Saint Simeon Stylites. Yet they tell me he might live in luxury if he spent on himself what he spends on science. His knowledge is of that strange, remote character, that it seems sometimes almost superhuman. He knows the ridges and chasms of the moon as a surveyor knows a garden-plot he has measured. He watches the snows that gather around the poles of Mars ; he is on the lookout for the expected comet at the moment when its faint stain of diffused light first shows itself ; he analyses the ray that comes from the sun’s photosphere ; he measures the rings

of Saturn ; he counts his asteroids to see that none are missing, as the shepherd counts the sheep in his flock. A strange un-earthly being ; lonely, dwelling far apart from the thoughts and cares of the planet on which he lives—an enthusiast who gives his life to knowledge ; a student of antiquity, to whom the records of the geologists are modern pages in the great volume of being and the pyramids a memorandum of yesterday, as the eclipse or occultation that is to take place thousands of years hence is an event of to-morrow in the diary without beginning and without end where he enters the aspects of the passing moment as it is read on the celestial dial.

In very marked contrast with this young man is the something more than middle-aged Registrar of Deeds, a rusty, sallow, smoke-dried looking personage, who belongs to this earth as exclusively as the other belongs to the firmament. His movements are as mechanical as those of a pendulum—to the office, where he changes his coat and plunges into messages and building-lots ; then, after changing his coat again, back to our table, and so, day by day, the dust of years gradually gathering around him as it does on the old folios that fill the shelves all round the great cemetery of past transactions of which he is the sexton.

Of the salesman who sits next him, nothing need be said except that he is good-looking, rosy, well dressed, and of very polite manners, only a little more brisk than the approved style of carriage permits—as one in the habit of springing with a certain alacrity at the call of a customer.

You would like to see, I don't doubt, how we sit at the table, and I will help you by means of a diagram which shows the present arrangements of our seats.



Our young Scheherazade varies her prose stories now and then, as I told you, with compositions in verse, one or two of which she has let me look over. Here is one of them, which she

allowed me to copy. It is from a story of hers, 'The Sun-Worshipper's Daughter,' which you may find in the periodical before mentioned, to which she is a contributor, if you can lay your hand upon a file of it. I think our Scheherazade has never had a lover in human shape, or she would not play so lightly with the fire-brands of the great passion.

## FANTASIA.

Kiss mine eyelids, beauteous Morn,  
Blushing into life new-born !  
Lend me violets for my hair,  
And thy russet robe to wear,  
And thy ring of rosiest hue  
Set in drops of diamond dew !

Kiss my cheek, thou noontide ray,  
From my Love so far away !  
Let thy splendour streaming down  
Turn its pallid lilies brown,  
Till its darkening shades reveal  
Where his passion pressed its seal !

Kiss my lips, thou Lord of light,  
Kiss my lips a soft good night !  
Westward sinks thy golden car ;  
Leave me but the evening star,  
And my solace that shall be,  
Borrowing all its light from thee !

## III.

THE Old Master was talking about a concert he had been to hear.

'I don't like your chopped music any way. That woman—she had more sense in her little finger than forty medical societies—Florence Nightingale—says that the music you *pour* out is good for sick folks, and the music you *pound* out isn't. Not that exactly, but something like it. I have been to hear some music-pounding. It was a young woman, with as many white muslin flounces round her as the planet Saturn has rings; that did it. She gave the music-stool a twirl or two, and fluffed down on to it like a whirl of soapsuds in a hand-basin. Then she pushed up her cuffs as if she was going to fight for the champion's belt. Then she worked her wrists and her hands, to limber 'em, I suppose, and spread out her fingers till they looked as though they would pretty much cover the key-board, from

the growling end to the little squeaky one. Then those two hands of hers made a jump at the keys as if they were a couple of tigers coming down on a flock of black and white sheep, and the piano gave a great howl, as if its tail had been trod on. Dead stop—so still you could hear your hair growing. Then another jump, and another howl, as if the piano had two tails and you had trod on both of 'em at once, and then a grand clatter and scramble and string of jumps, up and down, back and forward, one hand over the other, like a stampede of rats and mice more than like anything I call music. I like to hear a woman sing, and I like to hear a fiddle sing, but these noises they hammer out of their wood and ivory anvils—don't talk to me, I know the difference between a bullfrog and a woodthrush, and——'

Pop! went a small piece of artillery such as is made of a stick of elder and carries a pellet of very moderate consistency. That Boy was in his seat and looking demure enough, but there could be no question that he was the artilleryman who had discharged the missile. The aim was not a bad one, for it took the Master full in the forehead, and had the effect of checking the flow of his eloquence. How the little monkey had learned to time his interruptions, I do not know, but I have observed more than once before this that the popgun would go off just at the moment when some one of the company was getting too energetic or prolix. The boy isn't old enough to judge for himself when to intervene to change the order of conversation; no, of course he isn't. Somebody must give him a hint. Somebody—who is it? I suspect Dr. B. Franklin. He looks too knowing, there is certainly a trick somewhere. Why, a day or two ago I was myself discoursing, with considerable effect, as I thought, on some of the new aspects of humanity, when I was struck full on the cheek by one of these little pellets, and there was such a confounded laugh, that I had to wind up and leave off with a preposition instead of a good mouthful of polysyllables. I have watched our young doctor, however, and have been entirely unable to detect any signs of communication between him and this audacious child, who is like to become a power among us; for that popgun is fatal to any talker who is hit by its pellet. I have suspected a foot under the table as the prompter, but I have been unable to detect the slightest movement or look as if he were making one on the part of Dr. Benjamin Franklin. I cannot help thinking of the *flappers* in Swift's Laputa, only they gave one a hint when to speak and another a hint to listen, whereas the popgun says unmistakably, 'Shut up!'

I should be sorry to lose my confidence in Dr. B. Franklin, who seems very much devoted to his business, and whom I mean to consult about some small symptoms I have had lately.



Perhaps it is coming to a new boarding-house. The young people who come into Paris from the provinces are very apt—so I have been told by one that knows—to have an attack of typhoid fever a few weeks or months after their arrival. I have not been long enough at this table to get well acclimatised ; perhaps that is it. Boarding-House Fever. Something like horse-ail, very likely—horses get it, you know, when they are brought to city stables. A little ‘off my feed,’ as Hiram Woodruff would say. A queer discolouration about my forehead. Query, a bump? Cannot remember any. Might have got it against bed-post or something while asleep. Very unpleasant to look so. I wonder how my portrait would look, if anybody should take it now? I hope not quite so badly as one I saw the other day, which I took for the end man of the Ethiopian Serenaders, or some traveller who had been exploring the sources of the Niger, until I read the name at the bottom and found it was a face I knew as well as my own.

I must consult somebody, and it is nothing more than fair to give our young doctor a chance. Here goes for Dr. Benjamin Franklin.

The young doctor has a very small office and a very large sign, with a transparency at night big enough for an oyster-shop. These young doctors are particularly strong, as I understand, on what they call *diagnosis*—an excellent branch of the healing art, full of satisfaction to the curious practitioner, who likes to give the right Latin name to one’s complaint ; not quite so satisfactory to the patient, as it is not so very much pleasanter to be bitten by a dog with a collar round his neck telling you that he is called *Snap* or *Teaser*, than by a dog without a collar. Sometimes, in fact, one would a little rather not know the exact name of his complaint, as, if he does, he is pretty sure to look it out in a medical dictionary, and then if he reads, *This terrible disease is attended with vast suffering, and is inevitably mortal*, or any such statement, it is apt to affect him unpleasantly.

I confess to a little shakiness when I knocked at Dr. Benjamin’s office door. ‘Come in!’ exclaimed Dr. B. F. in tones that sounded ominous and sepulchral. And I went in.

I don’t believe the chambers of the Inquisition ever presented a more alarming array of implements for extracting a confession, than our young doctor’s office did of instruments to make nature tell what was the matter with a poor body.

There were Ophthalmoscopes and Rhinoscopes and Otoscopes and Laryngoscopes and Stethoscopes ; and Thermometers and Spirometers and Dynamometers and Sphygmometers and Pleximeters ; and Probes and Probangs and all sorts of frightful inquisitive exploring contrivances ; and scales to weigh you in, and tests and balances and pumps and electro-magnets and

magneto-electric machines ; in short, apparatus for doing everything but turn you inside out.

Dr. Benjamin set me down before his one window and began looking at me with such a superhuman air of sagacity, that I felt like one of those open-breasted clocks which make no secret of their inside arrangements, and almost thought he could see through me as one sees through a shrimp or a jelly-fish. First he looked at the place inculcated, which had a sort of greenish-brown colour, with his naked eyes, with much corrugation of forehead and fearful concentration of attention ; then through a pocket-glass which he carried. Then he drew back a space for a perspective view. Then he made me put out my tongue, and laid a slip of blue paper on it, which turned red and scared me a little. Next he took my wrist ; but instead of counting my pulse in the old fashioned way, he fastened a machine to it that marked all the beats on a sheet of paper—for all the world like a scale of the heights of mountains, say from Mount Tom up to Chimborazo, and then down again, and up again, and so on. In the meantime he asked me all sorts of questions about myself and all my relatives, whether we had been subject to this and that malady, until I felt as if we must some of us have had more or less of them, and could not feel quite sure whether Elephantiasis and Beriberi and Progressive Locomotor Ataxy did not run in the family.

After all this overhauling of myself and my history, he paused and looked puzzled. Something was suggested about what he called an 'exploratory puncture.' This I at once declined with thanks. Suddenly a thought struck him. He looked still more closely at the discolouration I have spoken of.

'Looks like—I declare it reminds me of—very rare ! very curious ! It would be strange if my first case—of this kind—should be one of our boarders !'

'What kind of a case do you call it ?' I said, with a sort of feeling that he could inflict a severe or a light malady on me, as if he were a judge passing sentence.

'The colour reminds me,' said Dr. B. Franklin, 'of what I have seen in a case of Addison's Disease, *Morbus Addisonii*.'

'But my habits are quite regular,' I said ; for I remembered that the distinguished essayist was too fond of his brandy and water, and I confess that the thought was not pleasant to me of following Dr. Johnson's advice, with the slight variation of giving my days and my nights to trying on the favourite maladies of Addison.

'Temperance people are subject to it !' exclaimed Dr. Benjamin, almost exultingly, I thought.

'But I had the impression that the author of the *Spectator* was afflicted with a dropsy, or some such inflated malady, to which persons of sedentary and bibacious habits are liable.' ('A literary

swell,' I thought to myself, but I did not say it. I felt too serious.)

'The author of the *Spectator*!' cried out Dr. Benjamin, 'I mean the celebrated Dr. Addison, inventor, I would say discoverer, of the wonderful new disease called after him.'

'And what may this valuable invention or discovery consist in?' I asked, for I was curious to know the nature of the gift which this benefactor of the race had bestowed upon us.

'A most interesting affection, and rare too. Allow me to look closely at that discolouration once more for a moment. *Cutis ænea*, bronze skin, they call it sometimes—extraordinary pigmentation—a little more to the light if you please—ah! now I get the bronze colouring admirably, beautifully! Would you have any objection to showing your case to the Societies of Medical Improvement and Medical Observation?'

'My case! O dear! May I ask if any vital organ is commonly involved in this interesting complaint?' I said faintly.

'Well, sir,' the young doctor replied, 'there is an organ which is—sometimes—a little—touched, I may say; a very curious and—ingenious little organ or pair of organs. Did you ever hear of the *Capsulæ Suprarenales*?'

'No,' said I, 'is it a mortal complaint?' I ought to have known better than to ask such a question, but I was getting nervous, and thinking about all sorts of horrid maladies people are liable to, with horrid names to match.

'It isn't a complaint, I mean they are not a complaint—they are two small organs, as I said, inside of you, and nobody knows what is the use of them. The most curious thing is that when anything is the matter with them you turn of the colour of bronze. After all, I didn't mean to say I believed it was *Morbus Addisonii*; I only thought of that when I saw the discolouration.'

So he gave me a recipe, which I took care to put where it could do no hurt to anybody, and I paid him his fee (which he took with the air of a man in the receipt of a great income) and said 'Good morning.'

What in the name of a thousand diablos is the reason these confounded doctors will mention their guesses about 'a case,' as they call it, and all its conceivable possibilities, out loud before their patients? I don't suppose there is anything in all this nonsense about 'Addison's Disease,' but I wish he hadn't spoken of that very interesting ailment, and I should feel a little easier if that discolouration would leave my forehead. I will ask the Landlady about it—these old women often know more than the young doctors just come home with long names for everything they don't know how to cure. But the name of this complaint sets me thinking. Bronzed skin! What an odd idea! Wonder if it spreads all over one. That would be picturesque and plea-

sant, now, wouldn't it? To be made a living statue of—nothing to do but strike an attitude. Arm up—so—like the one in the garden. John of Bologna's Mercury—thus—on one foot. Needy knife-grinder in the Tribune at Florence. No, not 'needy,' come to think of it. Marcus Aurelius on horseback. Query. Are horses subject to the *Morbus Addisonii*? Advertise for a bronzed horse—Lyceum invitations and engagements—bronze *versus* brass.—What's the use in being frightened? Bet it was a bump. Pretty certain I bumped my forehead against something. Never heard of a bronzed man before. Have seen white men, black men, red men, yellow men, two or three blue men, stained with doctor's stuff; some green ones—from the country; but never a bronzed man. Poh, poh! Sure it was a bump. Ask Landlady to look at it.

Landlady did look at it. Said it was a bump, and no mistake. Recommended a piece of brown paper dipped in vinegar. Made the house smell as if it was in quarantine for the plague from Smyrna, but discolouration soon disappeared—so I did not become a bronzed man after all,—hope I never shall while I am alive. Shouldn't mind being done in bronze after I was dead. On second thoughts not so clear about it, remembering how some of them look that we have got stuck up in public; think I had rather go down to posterity in an Ethiopian Minstrel portrait, like our friend's the other day.

'You were kind enough to say,' I remarked to the Master, 'that you read my poems and liked them. Perhaps you would be good enough to tell me what it is you like about them?'

The Master harpooned a breakfast-roll and held it up before me.—'Will you tell me,' he said, 'why you like that breakfast-roll? I suppose he thought that would stop my mouth in two senses. But he was mistaken.

'To be sure I will,' said I. 'First, I like its mechanical consistency; brittle externally—that is for the teeth, which want resistance to be overcome; soft, spongy, well tempered and flavoured internally—that is for the organ of taste; wholesome, nutritious—that is for the internal surfaces and the system generally.'

'Good!' said the Master, and laughed a hearty terrestrial laugh.

I hope he will carry that faculty of an honest laugh with him wherever he goes—why shouldn't he? The 'order of things,' as he calls it, from which hilarity was excluded, would be crippled and one-sided enough. I don't believe the human gamut will be cheated of a single note after men have done breathing this fatal atmospheric mixture and die into the ether of immortality!

I didn't *say* all that; if I had said it, it would have brought a pellet from the popgun, I feel quite certain.

The Master went on after he had had out his laugh :

‘There is one thing I am His Imperial Majesty about, and that is my likes and dislikes. What if I do like your verses—you can’t help yourself. I don’t doubt somebody or other hates ’em, and hates you and everything you do, or ever did, or ever can do. He is all right ; there is nothing you or I like that somebody doesn’t hate. Was there ever anything wholesome that was not poison to somebody? If you hate honey or cheese, or the products of the dairy—I know a family, a good many of whose members can’t touch milk, butter, cheese, and the like—why, say so, but don’t find fault with the bees and the cows. Some are afraid of roses, and I have known those that thought a pond-lily a disagreeable neighbour. That Boy will give you the metaphysics of likes and dislikes. Look here—you young philosopher over there—do you like candy?’

*That Boy.*—‘You bet ! Give me a stick and see if I don’t.’

‘And can you tell me why you like candy?’

*That Boy.*—‘Because I do.’

‘There, now, that is the whole matter in a nutshell. Why do your teeth like crackling crust, and your organs of taste like spongy crumb, and your digestive contrivances take kindly to bread rather than toadstools——’

*That Boy* (thinking he was still being catechised).—‘Because they do.’

Whereupon the Landlady said ‘Sh !’ and the Young Girl laughed, and the Lady smiled ; and Dr. Ben Franklin kicked him, moderately, under the table, and the Astronomer looked up at the ceiling to see what had happened, and the Member of the Haouse cried, ‘Order ! Order !’ and the Salesman said, ‘Shut up, cash-boy !’ and the rest of the boarders kept on feeding ; except the Master, who looked very hard but half approvingly at the small intruder, who had come about as nearly right as most professors would have done.

‘You poets,’ the Master said after this excitement had calmed down, ‘you poets have one thing about you that is odd. You talk about everything as if you knew more about it than the people whose business it is to know *all* about it. I suppose you do a little of what we teachers used to call “cramming,” now and then?’

‘If you like your breakfast you mustn’t ask the cook too many questions,’ I answered.

‘Oh, come now, don’t be afraid of letting out your secrets. I have a notion I can tell a poet that gets himself up, just as I tell a make-believe old man on the stage by the line where the gray skull-cap joins the smooth forehead of the young fellow of seventy. You’ll confess to a rhyming dictionary, anyhow, won’t you?’

'I would as lief use that as any other dictionary, but I don't want it. When a word comes up fit to end a line with I can *feel* all the rhymes in the language that are fit to go with it without naming them. I have tried them all so many times, I know all the polygamous words and all the monogamous ones, and all the unmarrying ones—the whole lot that have no mates—as soon as I hear their names called. Sometimes I run over a string of rhymes, but generally speaking it is strange what a short list it is of those that are good for anything. That is the pitiful side of all rhymed verse. Take two such words as *home* and *world*. What can you do with *chrome* or *loam* or *gnome* or *tome*? You have *dome*, *foam*, and *roam*, and not much more to use in your *pome*, as some of our fellow-countrymen call it. As for *world*, you know that in all human probability somebody or something will be *hurled* into it or out of it; its clouds may be *furled* or its grass *impearled*; possibly something may be *whirled*, or *curled*, or even *swirled*—one of Leigh Hunt's words, which with *lush*, one of Keat's, is an important part of the stock-in-trade of some dealers in rhyme.'

'And how much do you versifiers know of all those arts and sciences you refer to as if you were as familiar with them as a cobbler is with his wax and lapstone?'

'Enough not to make too many mistakes. The best way is to ask some expert before one risks himself very far in illustrations from a branch he does not know much about. Suppose, for instance, I wanted to use the *double star* to illustrate anything, say the relation of two human souls to each other, what would I do? Why, I would ask our young friend there to let me look at one of those loving celestial pairs through his telescope, and I don't doubt he'd let me do so, and tell me their names and all I wanted to know about them.'

'I should be most happy to show any of the double stars or whatever else there might be to see in the heavens to any of our friends at this table,' the young man said, so cordially and kindly that it was a real invitation.

'Show us the man in the moon,' said That Boy.

'I should so like to see a double star!' said Scheherazade, with a very pretty air of smiling modesty.

'Will you go, if we make up a party?' I asked the Master.

'A cold in the head lasts me from three to five days,' answered the Master. 'I am not so very fond of being out in the dew like Nebuchadnezzar; that will do for you young folks.'

I suppose I must be one of the young folks—not so young as our Scheherazade, not so old as the Capitalist—young enough at any rate to want to be of the party. So we agreed that on some fair night when the Astronomer should tell us that there was to be a fine show in the skies, we would make up a party and go to

the Observatory. I asked the Scarabee whether he would not like to make one of us.

'Out of the question, sir, out of the question. I am altogether too much occupied with an important scientific investigation to devote any considerable part of an evening to star-gazing.'

'Oh, indeed,' said I, 'and may I venture to ask on what particular point you are engaged just at present?'

'Certainly, sir, you may. It is, I suppose, as difficult and important a matter to be investigated as often comes before a student of natural history. I wish to settle the point once for all whether the *Pediculus Melittæ* is or is not the larva of *Meloe*.'

Now isn't this the drollest world to live in that one could imagine short of being in a fit of *delirium tremens*? Here is a fellow-creature of mine and yours who is asked to see all the glories of the firmament brought close to him, and he is too busy with a little unmentionable parasite that infests the bristly surface of a bee to spare an hour or two of a single evening for the splendours of the universe! I must get a peep through that microscope of his, and see the *pediculus* which occupies a larger space in his mental vision than the midnight march of the solar systems. The creature—the human one, I mean—interests me.

'I am very curious,' I said, 'about that *pediculus melittæ*' (just as if I knew a good deal about the little wretch and wanted to know more, whereas I had never heard him spoken of before, to my knowledge); 'could you let me have a sight of him in your microscope?'

You ought to have seen the way in which the poor dried-up little Scarabee turned towards me. His eyes took on a really human look, and I almost thought those antennæ-like arms of his would have stretched themselves out and embraced me. I don't believe any of the boarders had ever shown any interest in him, except the little monkey of a Boy, since he had been in the house. It is not strange; he had not seemed to me much like a human being, until all at once I touched the one point where his vitality had concentrated itself, and he stood revealed a man and a brother.

'Come in,' said he, 'come in right after breakfast, and you shall see the animal that has convulsed the entomological world with questions as to its nature and origin.'

So I went into the Scarabee's parlour, lodging-room, study, laboratory, and museum—a single apartment applied to these various uses, you understand.

'I wish I had time to have you show me all your treasures,' I said, 'but I am afraid I shall hardly be able to do more than look at the bee-parasite. But what a superb butterfly you have in that case!'

'Oh, yes, yes, well enough—came from South America with



the beetle there : look at *him* ! These *lepidoptera* are for children to play with, pretty to look at, so some think. Give me the *Coleoptera*, and the kings of the *Coleoptera* are the beetles ! *Lepidoptera* and *Neuroptera* for little folks ; and *Coleoptera* for men, sir !

The particular beetle he showed me in the case with the magnificent butterfly was an odious black wretch that one would say ' Ugh ! ' at, and kick it out of his path, if he did not serve him worse than that. But he looked at it as a coin-collector would look at a Pescennius Niger, if the coins of that emperor are as scarce as they used to be when I was collecting half-penny tokens and pine-tree shillings, and bartered bits of Roman brass with the head of Gallienus or some such old fellow on them.

' A beauty ! ' he exclaimed, ' and the only specimen of the kind in this country, to the best of my belief. A unique, sir, and there is a pleasure in exclusive possession. Not another beetle like that short of South America, sir.'

I was glad to hear that there were no more like it in this neighbourhood, the present supply of cockroaches answering every purpose, so far as I am concerned, that such an animal as this would be like to serve.

' Here are my bee-parasites,' said the Scarabee, showing me a box full of glass slides, each with a specimen ready mounted for the microscope. I was much struck with one little beast flattened out like a turtle, semi-transparent, six-legged, as I remember him, and every leg terminated by a single claw hooked like a lion's, and as formidable for the size of the creature as that of the royal beast.

' Lives on a bumblebee, does he ? ' I said. ' That's the way I call it. Bumblebee or bumblybee and huckleberry. Humblebee and whortleberry for people that say Woos-ses-ter and Nor-wich.'

The Scarabee did not smile ; he took no interest in trivial matters like this.

(Lives on a bumblebee. When you come to think of it, he must lead a pleasant kind of life. Sails through the air without the trouble of flying. Free pass everywhere that the bee goes. No fear of being dislodged ; look at those six grappling-hooks. Helps himself to such juices of the bee as he likes best ; the bee feeds on the choicest vegetable nectars, and he feeds on the bee. Lives either in the air or in the perfumed pavilion of the fairest and sweetest flowers. Think what tents the hollyhocks and the great lilies spread for him ! And wherever he travels a band of music goes with him, for this hum which wanders by us is doubtless to him a vast and inspiring strain of melody.)—I thought all this while the Scarabee supposed I was studying the minute characters of the enigmatical specimen.

‘I know what I consider your *pediculus melittæ*,’ I said at length.

‘Do you think it really the larva of *meloe*?’

‘Oh, I don’t know much about that, but I think he is the best cared for, on the whole, of any animal that I know of; and if I wasn’t a man, I believe I had rather be that little sybarite than anything that feasts at the board of nature.’

‘The question is, whether he is the larva of *meloe*,’ the Scarabee said, as if he had not heard a word of what I had just been saying. ‘If I live a few years longer it shall be settled, sir; and if my epitaph can say honestly that I settled it, I shall be willing to trust my posthumous fame to that achievement.’

I said good-morning to the specialist, and went off feeling not only kindly, but respectfully towards him. He is an enthusiast, at any rate, as ‘earnest’ a man as any philanthropic reformer, who, having passed his life in worrying people out of their misdoings into good behaviour, comes at last to a state in which he is never contented except when he is making somebody uncomfortable. He does certainly know one thing well, very likely better than anybody in the world.

I find myself somewhat singularly placed at our table between a minute philosopher who has concentrated all his faculties on a single subject, and my friend who finds the present universe too restricted for his intelligence. I would not give much to hear what the Scarabee says about the old Master, for he does not pretend to form a judgment of anything but beetles; but I should like to hear what the Master has to say about the Scarabee. I waited after breakfast until he had gone, and then asked the Master what he could make of our dried-up friend.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘I am hospitable enough in my feelings to him and all his tribe. These specialists are the coral-insects that build up a reef. By-and-by it will be an island, and for aught we know may grow into a continent. But I don’t want to be a coral-insect myself. I had rather be a voyager that visits all the reefs and islands the creatures build, and sails over the seas where they have as yet built up nothing. I am a little afraid that science is breeding us down too fast into coral-insects. A man like Newton or Leibnitz or Haller used to paint a picture of outward or inward nature with a free hand, and stand back and look at it as a whole and feel like an archangel; but nowadays you have a Society, and they come together and make a great mosaic, each man bringing his little bit and sticking it in its place, but so taken up with his pretty fragment that he never thinks of looking at the picture the little bits make when they are put together. You can’t get any talk out of these specialists away from their own subjects, any more than you can get help from a policeman outside of his own beat.’

'Yes,' said I, 'but why shouldn't we always set a man talking about the thing he knows best?'

'No doubt, no doubt, if you meet him once; but what are you going to do with him if you meet him every day? I travel with a man, and we want to make change very often in paying bills. But every time I ask him to change a pistareen, or give me two fo'pencehappenies for a ninepence, or help me to make out two and thrippence (mark the old Master's archaisms about the currency), 'what does the fellow do but put his hand in his pocket and pull out an old Roman coin; "I have no change," says he, "but this assarion of Diocletian." Mighty deal of good that'll do me!'

'It isn't quite so handy as a few specimens of the modern currency would be, but you can pump him on numismatics.'

'To be sure, to be sure. I've pumped a thousand men of all they could teach me, or at least all I could learn from 'em; and if it comes to that, I never saw the man that couldn't teach me something. I can get along with everybody in his place, though I think the place of some of my friends is over there among the feeble-minded pupils, and I don't believe there's one of *them* I couldn't go to school to for half an hour and be the wiser for it. But people you talk with every day have got to have feeders for their minds as much as the stream that turns a mill-wheel has. It isn't one little rill that's going to keep the float-boards going round. Take a dozen of the brightest men you can find in the brightest city, wherever that may be—perhaps you and I think we know—and let 'em come together once a month, and you'll find out in the course of a year or two the ones that have feeders from all the hillsides. Your common talkers, that exchange the gossip of the day, have no wheel in particular to turn, and the wash of the rain as it runs down the street is enough for them.'

'Do you mean you can always see the sources from which a man fills his mind—his feeders, as you call them?'

'I don't go quite so far as that,' the Master said. 'I've seen men whose minds were always overflowing, and yet they didn't read much or go much into the world. Sometimes you'll find a bit of a pond-hole in a pasture, and you'll plunge your walking-stick into it and think you are going to touch bottom. But you find you are mistaken. Some of these little stagnant pond-holes are a good deal deeper than you think; you may tie a stone to a bed-cord and not get soundings in some of 'em. The country boys will tell you they have no bottom, but that only means that they're mighty deep; and so a good many stagnant, stupid-seeming people are a great deal deeper than the length of your intellectual walking stick, I can tell you. There are hidden springs that keep the little pond-holes full when the mountain brooks are all dried up. You poets ought to know that.'

'I can't help thinking you are more tolerant towards the

specialists than I thought at first, by the way you seemed to look at our dried-up neighbour and his small pursuits.'

'I don't like the word *tolerant*,' the Master said. 'As long as the Lord can tolerate me I think I can stand my fellow-creatures. Philosophically, I love 'em all ; empirically, I don't think I am very fond of all of 'em. It depends on how you look at a man or a woman. Come here, Youngster, will you?' he said to That Boy.

The Boy was going to catch a blue-bottle to add to his collection, and was indisposed to give up the chase ; but he presently saw that the Master had taken out a small coin and laid it on the table, and felt himself drawn in that direction.

'Read that,' said the Master.

'U-n-i-ni—United States of America 5 cents.'

The Master turned the coin over. 'Now read that.'

'In God is our t-r-u-s-t—trust. 1869.'

'Is that the same piece of money as the other one?'

'There ain't any other one,' said the Boy, 'there ain't but one, but it's got two sides to it with different reading.'

'That's it, that's it,' said the Master, 'two sides to everybody, as there are to that piece of money. I've seen an old woman that wouldn't fetch five cents if you should put her up for sale at public auction ; and yet come to read the other side of her, she had a trust in God Almighty, that was like the bow anchor of a three-decker. It's faith in something and enthusiasm for something that makes a life worth looking at. I don't think your ant-eating specialist, with his sharp nose and pin-head eyes, is the very best every-day companion ; but any man who knows one thing well is worth listening to for once ; and if you are of the large-brained variety of the race, and want to fill out your programme of the order of things in a systematic and exhaustive way, and get all the half-notes and flats and sharps of humanity into your scale, you'd a great deal better shut your front door and open your two side ones when you come across a fellow that has made a real business of doing anything.'

That Boy stood all this time looking hard at the five-cent piece.

'Take it,' said the Master, with a good-natured smile.

The Boy made a snatch at it and was off for the purpose of investing it.

'A child naturally snaps at a thing as a dog does at his meat,' said the Master. 'If you think of it, we've all been quadrupeds. A child that can only crawl has all the instincts of a four-footed beast. It carries things in its mouth just as cats and dogs do. I've seen the little brutes do it over and over again. I suppose a good many children would stay quadrupeds all their lives, if they didn't learn the trick of walking on their hind legs from seeing all the grown people walking in that way.'

can make her laugh and cry reading my poor stories. And sometimes, when I feel as if I had written out all there is in me, and want to lie down and go to sleep and never wake up except in a world where there are no weekly papers—when everything goes wrong, like a car off the track—she takes hold and sets me on the rails again all right.’

‘How does she go to work to help you?’

‘Why, she *listens* to my stories to begin with, as if she really liked to hear them. And then, you know, I am dreadfully troubled now and then with some of my characters, and can’t think how to get rid of them. And she’ll say, perhaps, “Don’t shoot your villain this time, you’ve shot three or four already in the last six weeks: let his mare stumble and throw him and break his neck.” Or she’ll give me a hint about some new way for my lover to make a declaration. She must have had a good many offers, it’s my belief, for she has told me a dozen different ways for me to use in my stories. And whenever I read a story to her, she always laughs and cries in the right places; and that’s such a comfort; for there are some people that think everything pitiable is so funny, and will burst out laughing when poor Rip Van Winkle—you’ve seen Mr. Jefferson, haven’t you—is breaking your heart for you if you have one. Sometimes she takes a poem I have written, and reads it to me so beautifully, that I fall in love with it; and sometimes she sets my verses to music and sings them to me.’

‘You have a laugh together sometimes, do you?’

‘Indeed we do. I write for what they call the “Comic Department” of the paper now and then. If I did not get so tired of story-telling, I suppose I should be gayer than I am; but as it is, we two get a little fun out of my comic pieces. I begin them half crying sometimes, but after they are done they amuse me. I don’t suppose my comic pieces are very laughable; at any rate, the man who makes a business of writing me down says the last one I wrote is very melancholy reading, and that if it was only a little better perhaps some bereaved person might pick out a line or two that would do to put on a gravestone.’

‘Well, that is hard, I must confess. Do let me see those lines which excite such sad emotions.’

‘Will you read them very good-naturedly? If you will, I will get the paper that has “Aunt Tabitha.” That is the one the fault-finder said produced such deep depression of feeling. It was written for the “Comic Department.” Perhaps it will make you cry, but it wasn’t meant to.’

I will finish my report this time with our Scheherazade’s poem, hoping that any critic who deals with it will treat it with the courtesy due to all a young lady’s literary efforts.

## AUNT TABITHA.

Whatever I do and whatever I say,  
Aunt Tabitha tells me that isn't the way ;  
When *she* was a girl (forty summers ago)  
Aunt Tabitha tells me they never did so.

Dear Aunt ! If I only would take her advice !  
But I like my own way, and I find it *so* nice ;  
And besides, I forget half the things I am told ;  
But they all will come back to me—when I am o'd.

If a youth passes by, it may happen, no doubt,  
He may chance to look in as I chance to look out ;  
*She* would never endure an impertinent stare,—  
It is *horrid*, she says, and I mustn't sit there.

A walk in the moonlight has pleasures, I own,  
But it isn't quite safe to be walking alone ;  
So I take a lad's arm—just for safety, you know,—  
But Aunt Tabitha tells me *they* didn't do so.

How wicked we are, and how good they were then !  
They kept at arm's length those detestable men ;  
What an era of virtue she lived in !—But stay—  
Were the *men* all such rogues in Aunt Tabitha's day ?

If the men *were* so wicked, I'll ask my papa  
How he dared to propose to my darling mamma ;  
Was he like the rest of them ? Goodness ! Who knows ?  
And what shall *I* say if a wretch should propose ?

I am thinking if Aunt knew so little of sin,  
What a wonder Aunt Tabitha's aunt must have been !  
And her grand-aunt—it scares me—how shockingly sad  
That we girls of to-day are so frightfully bad !

A martyr will save us, and nothing else can ;  
Let *me* perish—to rescue some wretched young man !  
Though when to the altar a victim I go,  
Aunt Tabitha 'll tell me *she* never did so !

## IV.

THE Old Master has developed one quality of late for which I am afraid I hardly gave him credit. He has turned out to be an excellent listener.

'I love to talk,' he said, 'as a goose loves to swim. Sometimes I think it is because I *am* a goose. For I never talked much at any one time in my life without saying something or other I was sorry for.'

'You too !' said I. 'Now that is very odd, for it is an experience I have habitually. I thought you were rather too much of a philosopher to trouble yourself about such small matters as

to whether you had said just what you meant to or not ; especially as you know that the person you talk to does not remember a word of what you said the next morning, but is thinking, it is much more likely, of what she said, or how her new dress looked, or some other body's new dress which made hers look as if it had been patched together from the leaves of last November. That's what she's probably thinking about.'

'*She !*' said the Master, with a look which it would take half a column of this periodical to explain to the entire satisfaction of thoughtful readers of both sexes.

I paid the respect due to that most significant monosyllable, which, as the old Rabbi spoke it, with its *targum* of tone and expression, was not to be answered flippantly, but soberly, advisedly, and after a pause long enough for it to unfold its meaning in the listener's mind. For there are short single words (all the world remembers Rachel's *Helas !*) which are like those Japanese toys that look like nothing of any significance as you throw them on the water, but which after a little time open out into various strange and unexpected figures, and then you find that each little shred had a complicated story to tell of itself.

'Yes,' said I, at the close of this silent interval, during which the monosyllable had been opening out its meanings, '*she*. When I think of talking, it is of course with a woman. For talking at its best being an inspiration, it wants a corresponding divine quality of receptiveness ; and where will you find this but in woman ?'

The Master laughed a pleasant little laugh—not a harsh, sarcastic one, but playful, and tempered by so kind a look that it seemed as if every wrinkled line about his old eyes repeated, 'God bless you,' as the tracings on the walls of the Alhambra repeat a sentence of the Koran.

I said nothing, but *looked* the question, What are you laughing at ?

'Why, I laughed because I couldn't help saying to myself that a woman whose mind was taken up with thinking how she looked, and how her pretty neighbour looked, wouldn't have a great deal of thought to spare for all your fine discourse.'

'Come, now,' said I, 'a man who contradicts himself in the course of two minutes must have a screw loose in his mental machinery. I never feel afraid that such a thing can happen to me, though it happens often enough when I turn a thought over suddenly, as you did that five-cent piece the other day, that it reads differently on its two sides. What I meant to say is something like this. A woman, notwithstanding she is the best of listeners, knows her business, and it is a woman's business to please. I don't say that it is *not* her business to vote, but I do say that the woman who does not please is a false note in the harmonies of nature. She may not have youth or beauty or even



manner ; but she must have something in her voice or expression, or both, which it makes you feel better disposed towards your race to look at or listen to. She knows that as well as we do ; and her first question after you have been talking your soul into her consciousness is, Did *I* please ? A woman never forgets her sex. She would rather talk with a man than an angel, any day.'

This frightful speech of mine reached the ear of our Scheherazade, who said that it was perfectly shocking, and that I deserved to be shown up as the outlaw in one of her bandit stories.

'Hush, my dear,' said the Lady, 'you will have to bring John Milton into your story with our friend there, if you punish everybody who says naughty things like that. Send the little boy up to my chamber for "*Paradise Lost*," if you please. He will find it lying on my table. The little old volume—he can't mistake it.'

So the girl called That Boy round and gave him the message ; I don't know why *she* should give it, but she did, and the Lady helped her out with a word or two.

The little volume—its cover protected with soft white leather from a long kid glove, evidently suggesting the brilliant assemblies of the days when friends and fortune smiled—came presently and the Lady opened it. 'You may read this, if you like,' she said, 'it may show you that our friend is to be pilloried in good company.'

The young girl ran her eye along the passage the Lady pointed out, blushed, laughed, and slapped the book down as though she would have liked to box the ears of Mr. John Milton, if he had been a contemporary and fellow-contributor to the *Weekly Bucket*. 'I won't touch the thing,' she said. 'He was a horrid man to talk to, and he had as many wives as Bluebeard.'

'Fair play,' said the Master. 'Bring me the book, my little fractional superfluity—I mean you, my nursling—my boy, if that suits your small Highness better.'

The Boy brought the book.

The old Master, not unfamiliar with the great epic, opened pretty nearly to the place, and very soon found the passage. He read aloud with grand scholastic intonation and in a deep voice that silenced the table as if a prophet had just spoken, 'Thus saith the Lord :

'So spake our sire, and by his countenance seemed  
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse ; which Eve  
Perceiving—

went to water her geraniums, to make a short story of it, and left the two "conversationists," to wit, the angel Raphael and the gentleman—there was but one gentleman in society then, you know—to talk it out.

'Yet went she not, as not with such discourse  
 Delighted, or not capable her ear  
 Of what was high ; such pleasure she reserved,  
 Adam relating, she sole audtress ;  
*Her husband the relator she preferred*  
*Before the angel*, and of him to ask  
 Chose rather ; he she knew would intermix  
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute  
 With conjugal caresses : from his lips  
 Not words alone pleased her.'

Everybody laughed except the Capitalist, who was a little hard of hearing, and the Scarabee, whose life was too earnest for demonstrations of that kind. He had his eyes fixed on the volume, however, with eager interest.

'The pint's carried,' said the Member of the Haouse.

'Will you let me look at that book a single minute?' said the Scarabee. I passed it to him, wondering what in the world he wanted of 'Paradise Lost.'

'*Dermestes lardarius*,' he said, pointing to a place where the edge of one side of the outer cover had been slightly tasted by some insect. 'Very fond of leather while they're in the larva state.'

'Damage the goods as bad as mice,' said the Salesman.

'Eat half the binding off folio 67,' said the Registrar of Deeds. 'Something did, anyhow, and it wasn't mice. Found the shelf covered with little hairy cases belonging to something or other that had no business there.'

'Skins of the *Dermestes lardarius*,' said the Scarabee. 'You can always tell them by those brown hairy coats. That's the name to give them.'

'What good does it do to give 'em a name after they've eat the binding off my folios?' asked the Registrar of Deeds.

The Scarabee had too much respect for science to answer such a question as that ; and the book, having served its purposes, was passed back to the Lady.

'I return to the present question,' said I, 'if our friend the Member of the House of Representatives will allow me to borrow the phrase. Womanly women are very kindly critics, except to themselves and now and then to their own sex. The less there is of sex about a woman, the more she is to be dreaded. But take a real woman at her best moment—well dressed enough to be pleased with herself, not so resplendent as to be a show and a sensation, with the varied outside influences that set vibrating the harmonic notes of her nature stirring in the air about her—and what has social life to compare with one of those vital interchanges of thought and feeling with her that make an hour memorable? What can equal her tact, her delicacy, her subtlety of apprehension, her quickness to feel the changes of temperature as the warm and cool currents of talk

flow by turns? At one moment she is microscopically intellectual, critical, scrupulous in judgment as an analyst's balance, and the next as sympathetic as the open rose that sweetens the wind from whatever quarter it finds its way to her bosom. It is in the hospitable soul of a woman that a man forgets that he is a stranger, and so becomes natural and truthful, at the same time that he is mesmerised by all those divine differences which make her a mystery and a bewilderment to——

'If you fire your popgun at me, you little chimpanzee, I will stick a pin right through the middle of you and put you into one of this gentleman's beetle-cases!'

I caught the imp that time, but what started him was more than I could guess. It is rather hard that this spoiled child should spoil such a sentence as that was going to be; but the wind shifted all at once, and the talk had to come round on another tack, or at least fall off a point or two from its course.

'I'll tell you who I think are the best talkers in all probability,' said I to the Master, who, as I mentioned, was developing interesting talent as a listener; 'poets who never write verses. And there are a good many more of these than it would seem at first sight. I think you may say every young lover is a poet, to begin with. I don't mean either that *all* young lovers are good talkers—they have an eloquence all their own when they are with the beloved object, no doubt, emphasized after the fashion the solemn bard of Paradise refers to with such delicious humour in the passage we just heard—but a little talk goes a good way in most of these cooing matches, and it wouldn't do to report them too literally. What I mean is, that a man with the gift of musical and impassioned phrase (and love often *lends* that to a young person for a while), who "wreaks" it, to borrow Byron's word, on conversation as the natural outlet of his sensibilities and spiritual activities, is likely to talk better than the poet, who plays on the instrument of verse. A great pianist or violinist is rarely a great singer. To write a poem is to expend the vital force which would have made one brilliant for an hour or two, and to expend it on an instrument with more pipes, reeds, keys, stops, and pedals than the Great Organ that shakes New England every time it is played in full blast.'

'Do you mean that it is hard work to write a poem?' said the old Master. 'I had an idea that a poem wrote itself, as it were, very often; that it came by influx, without voluntary effort. Indeed, you have spoken of it as an inspiration rather than a result of volition.'

'Did you ever see a great ballet-dancer?' I asked him.

'I have seen Taglioni,' he answered. 'She used to take her steps rather prettily. I have seen the woman that danced the cap-stone on to Bunker Hill Monument, as Orpheus moved the rocks by music—the Elssler woman—Fanny Elssler. She would dance you a rigadon or cut a pigeon's wing for you very respectably.'

(Confound this old college book-worm, he has seen everything !)

‘ Well, did these two ladies dance as if it was hard work to them ?’

‘ Why, no ; I should say they danced as if they liked it, and couldn’t help dancing ; they looked as if they felt so “ corky ” it was hard to keep them down.’

‘ And yet they had been through such work to get their limbs strong and flexible and obedient, that a cart-horse lives an easy life compared to theirs while they were in training.’

The Master cut in just here. I had sprung the trap of a reminiscence.

‘ When I was a boy,’ he said, ‘ some of the mothers in our small town, who meant that their children should know what was what as well as other people’s children, laid their heads together, and got a dancing-master to come out from the city and give instruction at a few dollars a quarter to the young folks of condition in the village. Some of their husbands were ministers and some were deacons, but the mothers knew what they were about, and they didn’t see any reason why ministers’ and deacons’ wives’ children shouldn’t have as easy manners as the sons and daughters of Belial. So, as I tell you, they got a dancing-master to come out to our place—a man of good repute, a most respectable man—madam’ (to the Landlady), ‘ you must remember the worthy old citizen, in his advanced age, going about the streets, a most gentlemanly bundle of infirmities—only he always cocked his hat a little too much on one side, as they do here and there along the Connecticut River, and sometimes on our city sidewalks, when they’ve got a new beaver ; they got him, I say, to give us boys and girls lessons in dancing and deportment. He was as gay and as lively as a squirrel, as I remember him, and used to spring up in the air and “ cross his feet,” as we called it, three times before he came down. Well, at the end of each term there was what they called an “ exhibition ball,” in which the scholars danced cotillons and country-dances ; also something called a “ gavotte,” and I think one or more walked a minuet. But all this is not what I wanted to say. At this exhibition ball he used to bring out a number of hoops wreathed with roses, of the perennial kind, by the aid of which a number of amazingly complicated and startling evolutions were exhibited ; and also his two daughters, who figured largely in these evolutions, and whose wonderful performances to us, who had not seen Miss Taglioni or Miss Elssler, were something quite wonderful, in fact, surpassing the natural possibilities of human beings. Their extraordinary powers were, however, accounted for by the following explanation, which was accepted in the school as entirely satisfactory. A certain little bone in the ankles of each of these young girls had been broken intentionally, *secundum artem*, at a very early age, and thus they had been fitted to accomplish these surprising feats which threw the

achievements of the children, who were left in the condition of the natural man, into ignominious shadow.'

'Thank you,' said I, 'you have helped out my illustration so as to make it better than I expected. Let me begin again. Every poem that is worthy of the name, no matter how easily it seems to be written, represents a great amount of vital force expended at some time or other. When you find a beach strewn with the shells and other spoils that belonged once to the deep sea, you know the tide has been there, and that the winds and waves have wrestled over its naked sands. And so if I find a poem stranded in my soul and have nothing to do but to seize it as a wrecker carries off the treasure he finds cast ashore, I know I have paid at some time for that poem with some inward commotion, were it only an excess of enjoyment, which has used up just so much of my vital capital. But besides all the impressions that furnished the stuff of the poem, there has been hard work to get the management of that wonderful instrument I spoke of—the great organ, language. An artist that works in marble or colours has them all to himself and his tribe, but the man who moulds his thought in verse has to use the materials vulgarised by everybody's use, and glorify them by his handling. I don't know that you must break any bones in a poet's mechanism before his thought can dance in rhythm, but read your Milton and see what training, what patient labour, it took before he could shape our common speech into his majestic harmonies.

'It is rather singular, but the same kind of thing has happened to me not very rarely before, as I suppose it has to most persons, that just when I happened to be thinking about poets and their conditions, this very morning, I saw a paragraph or two from a foreign paper which is apt to be sharp, if not cynical, relating to the same matter. I can't help it; I want to have my talk about it, and if I say the same things that writer did, somebody can have the satisfaction of saying I stole them all.'

(I thought the person whom I have called hypothetically *The Man of Letters* changed colour a little and betrayed a certain awkward consciousness that somebody was looking at him or thinking of him; but I am a little suspicious about him, and may do him wrong.)

'That poets are treated as privileged persons by their admirers and the educated public can hardly be disputed. That they consider themselves so there is no doubt whatever. On the whole, I do not know so easy a way of shirking all the civic and social and domestic duties, as to settle it in one's mind that one is a poet. I have, therefore, taken great pains to advise other persons labouring under the impression that they were gifted beings destined to soar in the atmosphere of song above the vulgar realities of earth, not to neglect any homely duty under the influence of that impression. The number of these persons

is so great that if they were suffered to indulge their prejudice against everyday duties and labours, it would be a serious loss to the productive industry of the country. My skirts are clear (so far as other people are concerned) of countenancing that form of intellectual opium-eating in which rhyme takes the place of the narcotic. But what are you going to do when you find John Keats an apprentice to a surgeon or apothecary? Isn't it rather better to get another boy to sweep out the shop and shake out the powders and stir up the mixtures, and leave him undisturbed to write his Ode on a Grecian Urn, or to a Nightingale? O yes, the critic I have referred to would say, if he is John Keats; but not if he is of a much lower grade, even though he be genuine, what there is of him. But the trouble is, the sensitive persons who belong to the lower grades of the poetical hierarchy do not know their own poetical limitations, while they do feel a natural unfitness and disinclination for many pursuits which young persons of the average balance of faculties take to pleasantly enough. What is forgotten is this, that every real poet, even of the humblest grade, is an *artist*. Now I venture to say that any painter or sculptor of real genius, though he may do nothing more than paint flowers and fruit, or carve cameos, is considered a privileged person. It is recognised perfectly that to get his best work he must be insured the freedom from disturbances which the creative power absolutely demands, more absolutely perhaps in these slighter artists than in the great masters. His nerves must be steady for him to finish a rose-leaf or the fold of a nymph's drapery in his best manner; and they will be unsteadied if he has to perform the honest drudgery which another can do for him quite as well. And it is just so with the poet, though he were only finishing an epigram; you must no more meddle roughly with him than you would shake a bottle of Chambertin and expect the "sunset glow" to redden your glass unclouded. On the other hand, it may be said that poetry is not an article of prime necessity, and potatoes are. There is a disposition in many persons just now to deny the poet his benefit of clergy, and to hold him no better than other people. Perhaps he is not, perhaps he is not so good, half the time; but he is a luxury, and if you want him you must pay for him, by not trying to make a drudge of him while he is all his lifetime struggling with the chills and heats of his artistic intermittent.'

There may have been some lesser interruptions during the talk I have reported as if it was a set speech, but this was the drift of what I said and should have said if the other man, in the Review I referred to, had not seen fit to meddle with the subject, as some fellow always does, just about the time when I am going to say something about it. The Old Master listened beautifully, except for cutting in once as I told you he did. But

now he had held in as long as it was in his nature to contain himself, and must have his say or go off in an apoplexy, or explode in some way.

‘I think you’re right about the poets,’ he said. ‘They are to common folk what repeaters are to ordinary watches. They carry music in their inside arrangements, but they want to be handled carefully or you put them out of order. And perhaps you mustn’t expect them to be quite as good timekeepers as the professional chronometer watches that make a speciality of being exact within a few seconds a month. But they think too much of themselves. So does everybody that considers himself as having a right to fall back on what he calls his idiosyncrasy. Yet a man *has* such a right, and it is no easy thing to adjust the private claim to the fair public demand on him. Suppose you are subject to *tic doloireux*, for instance. Every now and then a tiger that nobody can see catches one side of your face between his jaws and holds on till he is tired and lets go. Some concession must be made to you on that score, as everybody can see. It is fair to give you a seat that is not in the draught, and your friends ought not to find fault with you if you do not care to join a party that is going on a sleigh-ride. Now take a poet like Cowper. He had a mental neuralgia, a great deal worse in many respects than *tic doloireux* confined to the face. It was well that he was sheltered and relieved by the cares of kind friends, especially those good women, from as many of the burdens of life as they could lift off from him. I am fair to the poets—don’t you agree that I am?’

‘Why, yes,’ I said, ‘you have stated the case fairly enough, a good deal as I should have put it myself.’

‘Now, then,’ the Master continued, ‘I’ll tell you what is necessary to all these artistic idiosyncrasies to bring them into good square human relations outside of the special province where their ways differ from those of other people. I am going to illustrate what I mean by a comparison. I don’t know, by the way, but you would be disposed to think and perhaps call me a wine-bibber by the way in which I deal with that fluid for the purposes of illustration. But I make mighty little use of it, except as it furnishes me an image now and then, as it did, for that matter, to the Disciples and their Master. In my younger days they used to bring up the famous old wines, the White-top, the Juno, the Eclipse, the Essex Junior, and the rest, in their old, cobwebbed, dusty bottles. The resurrection of one of these old sepulchred dignitaries had something of solemnity about it; it was like the disinterment of a king; the bringing to light of the Royal Martyr King Charles I., for instance, that Sir Henry Hallford gave such an interesting account of. And the bottle seemed to inspire a personal respect: it was wrapped in a napkin, and borne tenderly and reverently round to the guests, and sometimes



a dead silence went before the first gush of its amber flood, and

'The boldest held his breath  
For a time.'

But nowadays the precious juice of a long-dead vintage is transferred carefully into a cut-glass decanter, and stands side by side with the sherry from a corner grocery, which looks just as bright and apparently thinks just as well of itself. The old historic Madeiras, which have warmed the periods of our famous rhetoricians of the past, and burned in the impassioned eloquence of our earlier political demi-gods, have nothing to mark them externally but a bit of thread it may be round the neck of the decanter, or a slip of ribbon, pink on one of them and blue on another.

'Go to a London club—perhaps I might find something nearer home that would serve my turn—but go to a London club, and there you will see the celebrities all looking alike modern, all decanted off from their historic antecedents and their costume of circumstance into the every-day aspect of the gentleman of common cultivated society. That is Sir Cœur de Lion Plantagenet in the mutton-chop whiskers and the plain gray suit; there is the Laureate in a frock-coat like your own, and the leader of the House of Commons in a neck-tie you do not envy. That is the kind of thing you want to take the nonsense out of you. If you are not decanted off from yourself every few days or weeks, you will think it sacrilege to brush a cobweb from your cork by-and-by. O little fool that has published a little book full of little poems or other sputtering tokens of an uneasy condition, how I love you for the one soft nerve of special sensibility that runs through your exiguous organism, and the one phosphorescent particle in your unilluminated intelligence! But if you don't leave your spun-sugar confectionery business once in a while, and come out among lusty men—the bristly, pachydermatous fellows that hew out the highways for the material progress of society, and the broad-shouldered, out-of-door men that fight for the great prizes of life—you will come to think that the spun-sugar business is the chief end of man, and begin to feel and look as if you felt as much above common people as that personage of whom Tourguéneff says that "he had the air of his own statue erected by national subscription."'

The Master paused and fell into a deep thinking fit, as he does sometimes. He had had his own say, it is true, but he had established his character as a listener to my own perfect satisfaction, for I too, was conscious of having preached with a certain prolixity.

I am always troubled when I think of my very limited mathematical capacities. It seems as if every well-organized mind should be able to handle numbers and quantities through their symbols to an indefinite extent; and yet, I am puzzled by what

seems to a clever boy with a turn for calculation as plain as counting his fingers. I don't think any man feels well grounded in knowledge unless he has a good basis of mathematical certainties, and knows how to deal with them and apply them to every branch of knowledge where they can come in to advantage.

Our young Astronomer is known for his mathematical ability, and I asked him what he thought was the difficulty in the minds that are weak in that particular direction, while they may be of remarkable force in other provinces of thought, as is notoriously the case with some men of great distinction in science.

The young man smiled and wrote a few letters and symbols on a piece of paper. 'Can you see through that at once?' he said.

I puzzled over it for some minutes and gave it up.

He said as I returned it to him, 'You have heard military men say that such a person had *an eye for country*, haven't you? One man will note all the landmarks, keep the points of compass in his head, observe how the streams run, in short, carry a map in his brain of any region that he has marched or galloped through. Another man takes no note of any of these things; always follows somebody else's lead when he can, and gets lost if he is left to himself; a mere owl in daylight. Just so some men have an *eye for an equation*, and would read at sight the one that you puzzled over. It is told of Sir Isaac Newton that he required no demonstration of the propositions in Euclid's Geometry, but as soon as he had read the enunciation the solution or answer was plain at once. The power may be cultivated, but I think it is to a great degree a natural gift, as is the eye for colour, as is the ear for music.'

'I think I could read equations readily enough,' I said, 'if I could only keep my attention fixed on them; and I think I could keep my attention on them if I were imprisoned in a thinking-cell, such as the Creative Intelligence shapes for its studio when at its divinest work.'

The young man's lustrous eyes opened very widely as he asked me to explain what I meant.

'What is the Creator's divinest work?' I asked.

'Is there anything more divine than the sun—than a sun with its planets revolving about it, warming them, lighting them, and giving conscious life to the beings that move on them?'

'You agree, then, that conscious life is the grand aim and end of all this vast mechanism? Without life that could feel and enjoy, the splendours and creative energy would all be thrown away. You know Harvey's saying, *omnia animalia ex ovo*—all animals come from an egg. You ought to know it, for the great controversy going on about spontaneous generation has brought it into special prominence lately. Well, then, the *ovum*, the egg, is, to speak in human phrase, the Creator's most private

and sacred studio for his *magnum opus*. Now, look at a hen's egg, which is a convenient one to study, because it is large enough and built solidly enough to look at and handle easily. That would be the form I would choose for my thinking-cell. Build me an oval with smooth, translucent walls, and put me in the centre of it with Newton's "Principia," or Kant's "Kritik," and I think I shall develop "an eye for an equation," as you call it, and a capacity for an abstraction.'

'But do tell me,' said the Astronomer, a little incredulously, 'what there is in that particular form which is going to help you to be a mathematician or a metaphysician?'

'It isn't help I want, it is removing hindrances. I don't want to see anything to draw off my attention. I don't want a cornice, or an angle, or anything but a containing curve. I want diffused light, and no single luminous centre to fix my eye, and so distract my mind from its one object of contemplation. The metaphysics of *attention* have hardly been sounded to their depths. The mere fixing the look on any single object for a long time may produce very strange effects. Gibbon's well-known story of the monks of Mount Athos and their contemplative practice is often laughed over, but it has a meaning. They were to shut the door of the cell, recline the beard and chin on the breast, and contemplate the gastric centre. "At first all will be dark and comfortless ; but if you persevere day and night, you will feel an ineffable joy ; and no sooner has the soul discovered the place of the heart, than it is involved in a mystic and ethereal light." And Mr. Braid produces absolute anæsthesia, so that surgical operations can be performed without suffering to the patient, only by making him fix his eyes and his mind on a single object ; and Newton is said to have said, as you remember, "I keep the subject constantly before me, and wait till the first dawns open slowly by little and little into a full and clear light." These are different, but certainly very wonderful, instances of what can be done by attention. But now suppose that your mind is in its nature discursive, erratic, subject to electric attractions and repulsions, *volage* ; it may be impossible for you to compel your attention except by taking away all external disturbances. I think the poets have an advantage and a disadvantage as compared with the steadier-going people. Life is so vivid to the poet, that he is too eager to seize and exhaust its multitudinous impressions. Like Sindbad in the valley of precious stones, he wants to fill his pockets with diamonds, but, lo ! there is a great ruby like a setting sun in its glory, like Bryant's blue gentian, seems to have dropped from the cerulean walls of heaven, and a nest of pearls that look as if they might be unhatched angel's eggs, and so he hardly knows what to seize, and tries for too many, and comes out of the enchanted valley with more gems than he can carry, and those that he lets fall by the wayside we

call his poems. You may change the image a thousand ways to show you how hard it is to make a mathematician or a logician out of a poet. He carries the tropics with him wherever he goes, he is in the true sense *filius naturæ*, and Nature tempts him as she tempts a child walking through a garden where all the finest fruits are hanging over him and dropping round him, where

The luscious clusters of the vine  
Upon (his) mouth do crush their wine,  
The nectarine and curious peach  
Into (his) hands themselves do reach ;

and he takes a bite out of the sunny side of this and the other, and ever stimulated and never satisfied, is hurried through the garden, and, before he knows it, finds himself at an iron gate which opens outward, and leaves the place he knows and loves——'

'For once he will perhaps soon learn to love and know better,' said the Master. 'But I can help you out with another comparison, not quite so poetical as yours. Why did not you think of a railway-station, where the cars stop five minutes for refreshments? Isn't that a picture of the poet's hungry and hurried feast at the banquet of life? The traveller flings himself on the bewildering miscellany of delicacies spread before him, the various tempting forms of ambrosia and seducing draughts of nectar, with the same eager hurry and restless ardour that you described in the poet. Dear me! If it wasn't for "All aboard!"—that summons of the deaf conductor which tears one away from his half-finished sponge-cake and coffee, how I, who do not call myself a poet, but only a questioner, should have enjoyed a long stop—say a couple of thousand years—at this way-station on the great railroad leading to the unknown terminus!'

'You say you are not a poet,' I said, after a little pause, in which I suppose both of us were thinking where the great railroad would land us after carrying us into the dark tunnel, the farther end of which no man has seen and taken a return train to bring us news about it—'you say you are not a poet, and yet it seems to me you have some of the elements which go to make one.'

'I don't think you mean to flatter me,' the Master answered, and what is more—for I am not afraid to be honest with you—I don't think you do flatter me. I have taken the inventory of my faculties as calmly as if I was an appraiser. I *have* some of the qualities, perhaps I may say many of the qualities, that make a man a poet, and yet I am not one. And in the course of a pretty wide experience of men—and women' (the Master sighed, I thought, but perhaps I was mistaken) 'I have met a good many poets who were not rhymesters, and a good many rhymesters who were not poets. So I am only one of the Voiceless, that I remember one of you singers had some verses about.

I think there is a little music in me, but it has not found a voice, and it never will. If I should confess the truth, there is no mere earthly immortality that I envy so much as the poet's. If your name is to live at all, it is so much more to have it live in people's hearts than only in their brains! I don't know that one's eyes fill with tears when he thinks of the famous inventor of logarithms, but a song of Burns's, or a hymn of Charles Wesley's goes straight to your heart, and you can't help loving both of them, the sinner as well as the saint. The works of other men live, but their personality dies out of their labours; the poet, who reproduces himself in his creations as no other artist does or can, goes down to posterity with all his personality blended with whatever is imperishable in his song. We see nothing of the bee that built the honeycomb and stored it with its sweets, but we can trace the veining in the wings of insects that flitted through the forests which are now coal-beds, kept unchanging in the amber that holds them; and so the passion of Sappho, the tenderness of Simonides, the purity of holy George Herbert, the lofty contemplativeness of James Shirley, are before us to-day as if they were living, in a few tears of amber verse. It seems, when one reads,

"Sweet day! so cool, so calm, so bright,"

or,

"The glories of our birth and state,"

as if it were not a very difficult matter to gain immortality—such an immortality at least as a perishable language can give. A single lyric is enough, if one can only find in his soul and finish in his intellect one of those jewels fit to sparkle "on the stretched forefinger of all time." A coin, a ring, a string of verses. These last, and hardly anything else does. Every century is an overloaded ship that must sink at last with most of its cargo. The small portion of its crew that get on board the new vessel which takes them off don't pretend to save a great many of the bulky articles. But they must not and will not leave behind the hereditary jewels of the race; and if you have found and cut a diamond, were it only a spark with a single polished facet, it will stand a better chance of being saved from the wreck than anything, no matter what, that wants much room for stowage.

'The pyramids last, it is true, but most of them have forgotten their builder's name. But the ring of Thotmes III., who reigned some fourteen hundred years before our era, before Homer sang, before the Argonauts sailed, before Troy was built, is in the possession of Lord Ashburnham, and proclaims the name of the monarch who wore it more than three thousand years ago. The gold coins with the head of Alexander the Great are some of them so fresh one might think they were newer than much of the silver currency we were lately handling. As we have been

quoting from the poets this morning, I will follow the precedent and give some lines from an epistle of Pope to Addison after the latter had written, but not yet published, his Dialogue on Medals. Some of these lines have been lingering in my memory for a great many years, but I looked at the original the other day and was so pleased with them that I got them by heart. I think you will say they are singularly pointed and elegant :

“ Ambition sighed ; she found it vain to trust  
 The faithless column and the crumbling bust ;  
 Huge moles, whose shadows stretched from shore to shore,  
 Their ruins perished, and their place no more !  
 Convinced, she now contracts her vast design,  
 And all her triumphs shrink into a coin.  
 A narrow orb each crowded conquest keeps,  
 Beneath her palm here sad Judea weeps ;  
 Now scantier limits the proud arch confine,  
 And scarce are seen the prostrate Nile or Rhine ;  
 A small Euphrates through the piece is rolled,  
 And little eagles wave their wings in gold.”

It is the same thing in literature. Write half a dozen folios full of other people's ideas (as all folios are pretty sure to be), and you serve as ballast to the lower shelves of a library, about as like to be disturbed as the kentledge in the hold of a ship. Write a story, or a dozen stories, and your book will be in demand like an oyster while it is freshly opened, and after that—— The highways of literature are spread over with the shells of dead novels, each of which has been swallowed at a mouthful by the public and is done with. But write a volume of poems. No matter if they are all bad but one, if that one is very good. It will carry your name down to posterity like the ring of Thotmes, like the coin of Alexander. I don't suppose one would care a great deal about it a hundred or a thousand years after he is dead, but I don't feel quite sure. It seems as if, even in heaven, King David might remember “The Lord is my Shepherd” with a certain twinge of earthly pleasure. But we don't know, we don't know.’

What in the world can have become of That Boy and his popgun while all this somewhat extended sermonising was going on ? I don't wonder you ask, beloved Reader, and I suppose I must tell you how we got on so long without interruption. Well, the plain truth is, the youngster was contemplating his gastric centre, like the Monks of Mount Athos, but in a less happy state of mind than those tranquil recluses, in consequence of indulgence in the heterogeneous assortment of luxuries procured with the five-cent piece given him by the kind-hearted Old Master. But you need not think I am going to tell you every time his popgun goes off, making a *Selah* of him whenever I want to change the subject. Sometimes he was ill-timed in his artillery

practice and ignominiously rebuked, sometimes he was harmlessly playful and nobody minded him, but every now and then he came in so apropos that I am morally certain he gets a hint from somebody who watches the course of the conversation and means through him to have a hand in it and stop any of us when we are getting prosy. But in consequence of That Boy's indiscretion we were without a check upon our expansiveness, and ran on in the way you have observed and may be disposed to find fault with.

One other thing the Master said before we left the table, after our long talk of that day.

'I have been tempted sometimes,' said he, 'to envy the immediate triumphs of the singer. He enjoys all that praise can do for him, and at the very moment of exerting his talent. And the singing women! Once in a while, in the course of my life, I have found myself in the midst of a tulip-bed of full-dressed, handsome women in all their glory, and when some one among them has shaken her gauzy wings, and sat down before the piano, and then, only giving the keys a soft touch now and then to support her voice, has warbled some sweet, sad melody intertwined with the longings or regrets of some tender-hearted poet, it has seemed to me that so to hush the rustling of the silks, and silence the babble of the buds, as they call the chicks of a new season, and light up the flame of romance in cold hearts, in desolate ones, in old, burnt-out ones—like mine, I was going to say, but I won't, for it isn't so, and you may laugh to hear me say it isn't so if you like—was perhaps better than to be remembered a few hundred years by a few perfect stanzas, when your grave-stone is standing aslant, and your name is covered over with a lichen as big as a militia colonel's cockade, and nobody knows or cares enough about you to scrape it off and set the tipsy old slate-stone upright again.'

I said nothing in reply to this, for I was thinking of a sweet singer to whose voice I had listened in its first freshness, and which is now only an echo in my memory. If any reader of the periodical in which these conversations are recorded can remember so far back as the first year of its publication, he will find among the papers contributed by a friend not yet wholly forgotten, a few verses, lively enough in their way, headed 'The Boys.' The sweet singer was one of this company of college classmates, the constancy of whose friendship deserves a better tribute than the annual offerings, kindly meant as they are, which for many years have not been wanting at their social gatherings. The small company counts many noted personages on its list, as is well known to those who are interested in such local matters, *but it is not known that every fifth man of the whole number now living is more or less of a poet—using that word with a*



generous breadth of significance. But it should seem that the divine gift it implies is more freely dispensed than some others, for while there are (or were, for one has taken his Last Degree) eight musical quills, there was but one pair of lips which could claim any special consecration to vocal melody. Not that one should undervalue the half-recitative of doubtful baritones, or the brilliant escapades of slightly unmanageable *falsettos*, or the concentrated effort of the proprietors of two or three effective notes, who may be observed lying in wait for them, and coming down on them with all their might, and the look on their countenances of 'I, too, am a singer.' But the voice that led all, and that all loved to listen to, the voice that was at once full, rich, sweet, penetrating, expressive, whose ample overflow drowned all the imperfections and made up for all the shortcomings of the others, is silent henceforth forevermore for all earthly listeners.

And these were the lines that one of 'The Boys,' as they have always called themselves for ever so many years, read at the first meeting after the voice which had never failed them was hushed in the stillness of death.

J. A.

1871.

One memory trembles on our lips ;  
 It throbs in every breast ;  
 In tear-dimmed eyes, in mirth's eclipse,  
 The shadow stands confessed.  
 O silent voice, that cheered so long  
 Our manhood's marching day,  
 Without thy breath of heavenly song  
 How weary seems the way !  
 Vain every pictured phrase to tell  
 Our sorrowing hearts' desire ;  
 The shattered harp, the broken shell,  
 The silent unstrung lyre ;  
 For youth was round us while he sang ;  
 It glowed in every tone ;  
 With bridal chimes the echoes rang,  
 And made the past our own.  
 O blissful dream ! Our nursery joys  
 We know must have an end,  
 But love and friendship's broken toys  
 May God's good angels mend !  
 The cheering smile, the voice of mirth  
 And laughter's gay surprise  
 That please the children born of earth,  
 Why deem that Heaven denies ?  
 Methinks in that refulgent sphere  
 That knows not sun or moon,  
 An earth-born saint might long to hear  
 One verse of ' Bonny Doon ' ;

Or walking through the streets of gold  
 In Heaven's unclouded light,  
 His lips recall the song of old,  
 And hum 'The sky is bright.'

\* \* \* \*

And can we smile when thou art dead ?  
 Ah, brothers, even so !  
 The rose of summer will be red,  
 In spite of winter's snow.

Thou wouldst not leave us all in gloom  
 Because thy song is still,  
 Nor blight the banquet-garland's bloom  
 With grief's untimely chill.

The sighing wintry winds complain—  
 The singing bird has flown—  
 Hark ! heard I not that ringing strain,  
 That clear celestial tone ?

How poor these pallid phrases seem,  
 How weak this tinkling line,  
 As warbles through my waking dream  
 That angel voice of thine !

Thy requiem asks a sweeter lay ;  
 It falters on my tongue ;  
 For all we vainly strive to say,  
 Thou shouldst thyself have sung !

## V.

I FEAR that I have done injustice in my conversation and my report of it to a most worthy and promising young man whom I should be very sorry to injure in any way. Dr. Benjamin Franklin got hold of my account of my visit to him, and complained that I had made too much of the expression he used. He did not mean to say that he thought I was suffering from the rare disease he mentioned, but only that the colour reminded him of it. It was true that he had shown me various instruments, among them one for exploring the state of a part by means of a puncture, but he did not propose to make use of it upon my person. In short, I had coloured the story so as to make him look ridiculous.

'I am afraid I did,' I said, 'but wasn't I coloured myself so as to look ridiculous ? I've heard it said that people with the jaundice see everything yellow ; perhaps I saw things looking a little queerly, with that black and blue spot I couldn't account for threatening to make a coloured man and brother of me. But I am sorry if I have done you any wrong. I hope you won't lose any patients by my making a little fun of your meters and scopes and contrivances. They seem so odd to us outside people. Then the idea of being bronzed all over was such an alarming sugges-

tion. But I did not mean to damage your business, which I trust is now considerable, and I shall certainly come to you again if I have need of the services of a physician. Only don't mention the names of any diseases in English or Latin before me next time. I dreamed about *cutis ænea* half the night after I came to see you.'

Dr. Benjamin took my apology very pleasantly. He did not want to be touchy about it, he said, but he had his way to make in the world, and found it a little hard at first, as most young men did. People were afraid to trust them, no matter how much they knew. One of the old doctors asked him to come in and examine a patient's heart for him the other day. He went with him accordingly, and when they stood by the bedside, he offered his stethoscope to the old doctor. The old doctor took it and put the wrong end to his ear and the other to the patient's chest, and kept it there for about two minutes, looking all the time as wise as an old owl. Then he, Dr. Benjamin, took it and applied it properly, and made out where the trouble was in no time at all. But what was the use of a young man's pretending to know anything in the presence of an old owl? 'I saw by their looks,' he said, 'that they all thought I used the stethoscope wrong end up, and was nothing but a prentice hand to the old doctor.'

I am much pleased to say that since Dr. Benjamin has had charge of a dispensary district, and been visiting forty or fifty patients a day, I have reason to think he has grown a great deal more practical than when I made my visit to his office. I think I was probably one of his first patients, and that he naturally made the most of me. But my second trial was much more satisfactory. I got an ugly cut from a carving-knife in an affair of a goose of iron constitution in which I came off second best. I at once adjourned with Dr. Benjamin to his small office, and put myself in his hands. It was astonishing to see what a little experience of miscellaneous practice had done for him. He did not ask me any more questions about my hereditary predispositions on the paternal and maternal sides. He did not examine me with the stethoscope or the laryngoscope. He only strapped up my cut, and informed me that it would speedily get well by the 'first intention'—an odd phrase enough, but sounding much less formidable than *cutis ænea*.

I am afraid I have had something of the French prejudice which embodies itself in the maxim, 'young surgeon, old physician.' But a young physician who has been taught by great masters of the profession, in ample hospitals, starts in the profession knowing more than some old doctors have learned in a lifetime. Give him a little time to get the use of his wits in emergencies, and to know the little arts that do so much for a patient's comfort—just as you give a young sailor time to get his sea-legs on and teach his stomach to behave itself—and he will do well enough.

The Old Master knows more about this matter and about all the professions, as he does about everything else, than I do. My opinion is that he has studied two, if not three, of these professions in a regular course. I don't know that he has ever preached, except as Charles Lamb said Coleridge always did, for when he gets the bit in his teeth he runs away with the conversation, and if he only took a text his talk would be a sermon ; but if he has not preached, he has made a study of theology, as many laymen do. I know he has some shelves of medical books in his library, and has ideas on the subject of the healing art. He confesses to having had much intercourse with lawyers. So he has something to say on almost any subject that happens to come up. I told him my story about my visit to the young doctor, and asked him what he thought of youthful practitioners in general, and of Dr. Benjamin in particular.

'I'll tell you what,' the Master said, 'I know something about these young fellows that come home with their heads full of "science," as they call it, and stick up their signs to tell people they know how to cure their headaches and stomach-aches. Science is a first-rate piece of furniture for a man's upper chamber, if he has common sense on the ground-floor. But if a man hasn't got plenty of good common sense, the more science he has the worse for his patient.'

'I don't know that I see exactly how it is *worse* for the patient,' I said.

'Well, I'll tell you, and you'll find it's a mighty simple matter. When a person is sick, there is always something to be done for him, and done at once. If it is only to open or shut a window, if it is only to tell him to keep on doing just what he is doing already, it wants a man to bring his mind right down to the fact of the present case and its immediate needs. Now the present case, as the doctor sees it, is just exactly such a collection of paltry individual facts as never was before—a snarl and tangle of special conditions which it is his business to wind as much thread out of as he can. It is a good deal as when a painter goes to take the portrait of any sitter who happens to send for him. He has seen just such noses and just such eyes and just such mouths, but he never saw exactly such a face before, and his business is with that and no other person's—with the features of the worthy father of a family before him, and not with the portraits he has seen in galleries or books, or Mr. Copley's grand pictures of the fine old ories, or the Apollos and Jupiters of Greek sculpture. It is the same thing with the patient. His disease has features of its own ; there never was and never will be another case in all respects exactly like it. If a doctor has science without common sense, he treats a fever, but not this man's fever. If he has common sense without science, he treats this man's fever without knowing the general laws that govern all fevers and all vital

movements. I'll tell you what saves these fellows. They go for weakness, whenever they see it, with stimulants and strengtheners, and they go for over-action, heat, and high pulse, and the rest, with cooling and reducing remedies. That is three quarters of medical practice. The other quarter wants science and common sense too. But the men that have science only, begin too far back; and, before they get as far as the case in hand, the patient has very likely gone to visit his deceased relatives. You remember Thomas Prince's 'Chronological History of New England,' I suppose? He begins, you recollect, with Adam, and has to work down five thousand six hundred and twenty-four years before he gets to the Pilgrim Fathers and the *Mayflower*. It was all very well, only it didn't belong there, but got in the way of something else. So it is with 'science' out of place. By far the larger part of the facts of structure and function you find in the books of anatomy and physiology have no immediate application to the daily duties of the practitioner. You must learn systematically, for all that; it is the easiest way, and the only way that takes hold of the memory, except mere empirical repetition, like that of the handicraftsman. Did you ever see one of those Japanese figures with the points for acupuncture marked on it?

I had to own that my schooling had left out that piece of information.

'Well, I'll tell you about it. You see they have a way of pushing long slender needles into you for the cure of rheumatism and other complaints, and it seems there is a choice of spots for the operation, though it is very strange how little mischief it does in a good many places one would think unsafe to meddle with. So they had a doll made, and marked the spots where they had put in needles without doing any harm. They must have had accidents from sticking the needles into the wrong places now and then, but I suppose they didn't say a great deal about those. After a time, say a few centuries of experience, they had their doll all spotted over with safe places for sticking in the needles. That is their way of registering practical knowledge. We, on the other hand, study the structure of the body as a whole systematically, and have no difficulty at all in remembering the track of the great vessels and nerves, and knowing just what tracks will be safe and what unsafe. It is just the same thing with the geologists. Here is a man close by us boring for water through one of our ledges, because somebody else got water somewhere else in that way; and a person who knows geology, or ought to know it, because he has given his life to it, tells me he might as well bore there for lager-beer as for water.'

I thought we had had enough of this particular matter, and that I should like to hear what the Master had to say about the

three professions he knew something about, compared each with the others.

‘What is your general estimate of doctors, lawyers, and ministers?’ said I.

‘Wait a minute, till I have got through with your first question,’ said the Master. ‘One thing at a time. You asked me about the young doctors, and about our young doctor. They come home *très bien chaussés*, as a Frenchman would say, mightily well shod with professional knowledge. But when they begin walking round among their poor patients—they don’t commonly start with millionaires—they find that their new shoes of scientific acquirements have got to be broken in just like a pair of boots or brogans. I don’t know that I have put it quite strong enough. Let me try again. You’ve seen those fellows at the circus that get up on horseback so big that you wonder how they could climb into the saddle. But pretty soon they throw off their outside coat, and the next minute another one, and then the one under that, and so they keep peeling off one garment after another till people begin to look queer, and think they are going too far for strict propriety. Well, that is the way a fellow with a real practical turn serves a good many of his scientific wrappers—flings ’em off for other people to pick up, and goes right at the work of curing stomach-aches and all the other little mean unscientific complaints that make up the larger part of every doctor’s business. I think our Dr. Benjamin is a worthy young man, and if you are in need of a doctor at any time, I hope you will go to him, and if you come off without harm, I will—recommend some other friend to try him.’

I thought he was going to say he would try him in his own person, but the Master is not fond of committing himself.

‘Now, I will answer your other question,’ he said. ‘The lawyers are the cleverest men, the ministers are the most learned, and the doctors are the most sensible.’

‘The lawyers are a picked lot, “first scholars” and the like, but their business is as unsympathetic as Jack Ketch’s. There is nothing humanising in their relations with their fellow-creatures. They go for the side that retains them. They defend the man they know to be a rogue, and not very rarely throw suspicion on the man they know to be innocent. Mind you, I am not finding fault with them; every side of a case has a right to the best statement it admits of; but I say it does not tend to make them sympathetic. Suppose in a case of *Fever v. Patient*, the doctor should side with either party according to whether the old miser or his expectant heir was his employer. Suppose the minister should side with the Lord or the Devil, according to the salary offered and other incidental advantages, where the soul of a sinner was in question. You can see what a piece of work it would make of their sympathies. But the lawyers are quicker

witted than either of the other professions, and abler men generally. They are good-natured, or, if they quarrel, their quarrels are above-board. I don't think they are as accomplished as the ministers, but they have a way of cramming with special knowledge for a case which leaves a certain shallow sediment of intelligence in their memories about a good many things. They are apt to talk law in mixed company, and they have a way of looking round when they make a point, as if they were addressing a jury, that is mighty aggravating, as I once had occasion to see when one of 'em, and a pretty famous one, put me on the witness-stand at a dinner-party once.

'The ministers come next in point of talent. They are far more curious and widely interested outside of their own calling than either of the other professions. I like to talk with 'em. They are interesting men, full of good feeling, hard workers, always foremost in good deeds, and on the whole the most efficient civilizing class, working downwards from knowledge to ignorance, that is—now and then upwards also—that we have. The trouble is that so many of 'em work in harness, and it is pretty sure to chafe somewhere. They too often assume principles which would cripple our instincts and reason and give us a crutch of doctrine. I have talked with a great many of 'em of all sorts of belief, and I don't think they have fixed everything in their own minds, or are as dogmatic in their habits of thought as one would think, to hear 'em lay down the law in the pulpit. They used to lead the intelligence of their parishes; now they do pretty well if they keep up with it, and they are very apt to lag behind it. Then they must have a colleague. The old minister thinks he can hold to his old course, sailing right into the wind's eye of human nature, as straight as that famous old skipper John Bunyan; the young minister falls off three or four points and catches the breeze that left the old man's sails all shivering. By-and-by the congregation will get ahead of *him*, and then it must have another new skipper. The *priest* holds his own pretty well; the *minister* is coming down every generation nearer and nearer to the common level of the useful citizen—no oracle at all, but a man of more than average moral instincts, who, if he knows anything, knows how little he knows. The ministers are good talkers, only the struggle between nature and grace makes some of 'em a little awkward occasionally. The women do their best to spoil 'em, as they do the poets; you find it very pleasant to be spoiled, no doubt; so do they. Now and then one of 'em goes over the dam; no wonder, they're always in the rapids.'

By this time our three ladies had their faces all turned towards the speaker, like the weathercocks in a north-easter, and I thought it best to switch off the talk on to another rail.

'How about the doctors?' I said.



‘Theirs is the least learned of the professions, in this country at least. They have not half the general culture of the lawyers, nor a quarter of that of the ministers. I rather think, though, they are more agreeable to the common run of people than the men with black coats or the men with green bags. People can swear before ’em if they want to, and they can’t very well before ministers. I don’t care whether they want to swear or not, they don’t want to be on their good behaviour. Besides, the minister has a little smack of the sexton about him ; he comes when people are *in extremis*, but they don’t send for him every time they make a slight moral slip—tell a lie for instance, or smuggle a silk dress through the custom-house ; but they call in the doctor when a child is cutting a tooth, or gets a splinter in its finger. So it doesn’t mean much to send for him, only a pleasant chat about the news of the day ; for putting the baby to rights doesn’t take long. Besides, everybody doesn’t like to talk about the next world ; people are modest in their desires, and find this world as good as they deserve ; but everybody loves to talk physic. Everybody loves to hear of strange cases ; people are eager to tell the doctor of the wonderful cures they have heard of : they want to know what is the matter with somebody or other who is said to be suffering from “a complication of diseases,” and, above all, to get a hard name, Greek or Latin, for some complaint which sounds altogether too commonplace in plain English. If you will only call a headache a *Cephalalgia*, it acquires dignity at once, and a patient becomes rather proud of it. So I think doctors are generally welcome in most companies.

‘In old times, when people were more afraid of the Devil and of witches than they are now, they liked to have a priest or a minister somewhere near to scare ’em off ; but nowadays if you could find an old woman that would ride round the room on a broomstick, Barnum would build an amphitheatre to exhibit her in ; and if he could come across a young imp, with hoofs, tails, and budding horns, a lineal descendant of one of those “dæmons” which the good people of Gloucester fired at, and were fired at by “for the best part of a month together,” in the year 1692, the great showman would have him at any cost for his museum or menagerie. Men are cowards, sir, and are driven by fear as the sovereign motive. Men are idolaters and want something to look at, and kiss and hug, or throw themselves down before ; they always did, they always will ; and if you don’t make it of wood you must make it of words, which are just as much used for idols as promissory notes are used for values. The ministers have a hard time of it without bell and book and holy water ; they are dismounted men in armour since Luther cut their saddle-girths, and you can see they are quietly taking off one piece of iron after another, until some of the best of ’em are fighting the devil (not the zoölogical Devil with the

big D) with the sword of the Spirit, and precious little else in the way of weapons of offence or defence. But we couldn't get on without the spiritual brotherhood, whatever became of our special creeds. There is a genius for religion, just as there is for painting or sculpture. It is half-sister to the genius for music, and has some of the features which remind us of earthly love. But it lifts us all by its mere presence. To see a good man and hear his voice once a week would be reason enough for building churches and pulpits.'

The Master stopped all at once, and after about half a minute laughed his pleasant laugh.

'What is it?' I asked him.

'I was thinking of the great coach and team that is carrying us fast enough, I don't know but too fast, somewhere or other. The D.D.'s used to be the leaders, but now they are the wheel-horses. It's pretty hard to tell how much they pull, but we know they can hold back like the——'

'When we're going down hill,' I said, as neatly as if I had been a High-Church curate trained to snap at the last word of the response, so that you couldn't wedge in the tail of a comma between the end of the congregation's closing syllable and the beginning of the next petition. They do it well, but it always spoils my devotion. To save my life, I can't help watching them, as I watch to see a duck dive at the flash of a gun, and that is not what I go to church for. It is a juggler's trick, and there is no more religion in it than in catching a ball on the fly.

I was looking at our Scheherazade the other day, and thinking what a pity it was that she had never had fair play in the world. I wish I knew more of her history. There is one way of learning it—making love to her. I wonder whether she would let me and like it. It is an absurd thing, and I ought not to confess, but I tell you and you only, Beloved, my heart gave a perceptible jump when it heard the whisper of that possibility overhead! Every day has its ebb and flow, but such a thought as that is like one of those tidal waves they talk about, that rolls in like a great wall and overtops and drowns out all your landmarks, and you, too, if you don't mind what you are about and stand ready to run or climb or swim. Not quite so bad as that, though, this time. I take an interest in our Scheherazade. I am glad she didn't smile on the pipe and the Bohemian-looking fellow that finds the best part of his life in sucking at it. A fine thing, isn't it, for a young woman to marry a man who will hold her

'Something better than his dog, a little clearer than his horse,'

but not quite so good as his meerschaum? It isn't for me to throw stones, though, who have been a Nicotian a good deal more than half my days. Cigar-stump out now, and consequently have become very bitter on more persevering sinners.

I say I take an interest in our Scheherazade, but I rather think it is more paternal than anything else, though my heart did give that jump. It has jumped a good many times without anything very remarkable coming of it.

This visit to the Observatory is going to bring us all, or most of us, together in a new way, and it wouldn't be very odd if some of us should become better acquainted than we ever have been. There is a chance for the elective affinities. What tremendous forces they are, if two subjects of them come within range ! There lies a bit of iron. All the dynamic agencies of the universe are pledged to hold it just in that position, and there it will lie until it becomes a heap of red-brown rust. But see, I hold a magnet to it—it looks to you like just such a bit of iron as the other—and lo ! it leaves them all—the tugging of the mighty earth ; of the ghostly moon that walks in white, trailing the snaky waves of the ocean after her ; of the awful sun, twice as large as a sphere that the whole orbit of the moon would but just girdle—it leaves the wrestling of all their forces which are at a dead lock with each other, all fighting for it, and springs straight to the magnet. What a lucky thing it is for well-conducted persons that the maddening elective affinities don't come into play in full force very often !

I suppose I am making a good deal more of our prospective visit than it deserves. It must be because I have got it into my head that we are bound to have some kind of sentimental outbreak amongst us, and that this will give a chance for advances on the part of anybody disposed in that direction. A little change of circumstance often hastens on a movement that has been long in preparation. A chemist will show you a flask containing a clear liquid ; he will give it a shake or two, and the whole contents of the flask will become solid in an instant. Or you may lay a little heap of iron filings on a sheet of paper with a magnet beneath it, and they will be quiet enough as they are ; but give the paper a slight jar, and the specks of metal will suddenly find their way to the north or the south pole of the magnet, and take a definite shape not unpleasing to contemplate, and curiously illustrating the laws of attraction, antagonism, and average, by which the worlds, conscious and unconscious, are alike governed. So with our little party, with any little party of persons who have got used to each other ; leave them undisturbed, and they might remain in a state of equilibrium for ever ; but let anything give them a shake or a jar, and the long-striving but hindered affinities come all at once into play and finish the work of a year in five minutes.

We were all a good deal excited by the anticipation of this visit. The Capitalist, who for the most part keeps entirely to himself, seemed to take an interest in it, and joined the group in the parlour, who were making arrangements as to the details of

the eventful expedition, which was very soon to take place. The Young Girl was full of enthusiasm ; she is one of those young persons, I think, who are impressible and of necessity depressible when their nervous systems are overtasked, but elastic, recovering easily from mental worries and fatigues, and only wanting a little change of their conditions to get back their bloom and cheerfulness. I could not help being pleased to see how much of the child was left in her, after all the drudgery she had been through. What is there that youth will not endure and triumph over ? Here she was ; her story for the week was done in good season ; she had got rid of her villain by a new and original catastrophe ; she had received a sum of money for an extra string of verses—painfully small, it is true, but it would buy her a certain ribbon she wanted for the great excursion ; and now her eyes sparkled so that I forgot how tired and hollow they sometimes looked when she had been sitting up half the night over her endless manuscript.

The morning of the day we had looked forward to promised as good an evening as we could wish. The Capitalist, whose courteous and bland demeanour would never have suggested the thought that he was a robber and an enemy of his race, who was to be trampled underfoot by the beneficent regenerators of the social order as preliminary to the universal reign of peace on earth and good-will to men, astonished us all with a proposal to escort the three ladies and procure a carriage for their conveyance. The Lady thanked him in a very cordial way, but said she thought nothing of the walk. The Landlady looked disappointed at this answer. For her part, she was on her legs all day, and should be glad enough to ride, if so be he was going to have a carriage, at any rate. It would be a sight pleasanter than to trudge afoot, but she wouldn't have him go to the expense on her account. 'Don't mention it, madam,' said the Capitalist, in a generous glow of enthusiasm. As for the Young Girl, she did not often get a chance for a ride, and liked the idea of it for its own sake, as children do, and she insisted that the Lady should go in the carriage with her. So it was settled that the Capitalist should take the three ladies in the carriage, and the rest of us go on foot.

The evening behaved as it was bound to do on so momentous an occasion. The Capitalist was dressed with almost suspicious nicety. We pedestrians could not help waiting to see them off, and I thought he handed the ladies into the carriage with the air of a French marquis.

I walked with Dr. Benjamin and That Boy, and we had to keep the little imp on the trot a good deal of the way in order not to be too long behind the carriage party. The Member of the House walked with our two dummies—I beg their pardon, I mean the Registrar of Deeds and the Salesman.

The Man of Letters, hypothetically so called, walked by him-

self, smoking a short pipe which was very far from suggesting the spicy breezes that blow soft from Ceylon's isle.

I suppose everybody who reads this paper has visited one or more observatories, and of course knows all about them. But as it may hereafter be translated into some foreign tongue and circulated among barbarous, but rapidly improving people, people who have as yet no astronomers among them, it may be well to give a little notion of what kind of a place an observatory is.

To begin then : a deep and solid stone foundation is laid in the earth, and a massive pier of masonry is built up on it. A heavy block of granite forms the summit of this pier, and on this block rests the equatorial telescope. Around this structure a circular tower is built, with two or more floors, which come close up to the pier, but do not touch it at any point. It is crowned with a hemispherical dome, which, I may remark, half realizes the idea of my egg-shell studio. This dome is cleft from its base to its summit by a narrow, ribbon-like opening, through which is seen the naked sky. It revolves on cannon-balls, so easily that a single hand can move it, and thus the opening may be turned towards any point of the compass. As the telescope can be raised or depressed so as to be directed to any elevation from the horizon to the zenith, and turned around the entire circle like the dome, it can be pointed to any part of the heavens. But as the star or other celestial object is always apparently moving, in consequence of the real rotatory movement of the earth, the telescope is made to follow it automatically by an ingenious clock-work arrangement. No place, short of the temple of the living God, can be more solemn. The jars of the restless life around it do not disturb the serene intelligence of the half-reasoning apparatus. Nothing can stir the massive pier but the shocks that shake the solid earth itself. When an earthquake thrills the planet, the massive turret shudders with the shuddering rocks on which it rests, but it pays no heed to the wildest tempest, and while the heavens are convulsed and shut from the eye of the far-seeing instrument, it waits without a tremor for the blue sky to come back. It is the type of the true and steadfast man of the Roman poet, whose soul remains unmoved while the firmament cracks and tumbles about him. It is the material image of the Christian ; his heart resting on the Rock of Ages, his eyes fixed on the brighter world above.

I did not say all this while we were looking round among these wonders, quite new to many of us. People don't talk in straight-off sentences like that. They stumble and stop, or get interrupted, change a word, begin again, miss connections of verbs and nouns, and so on, till they blunder out their meaning. But I did let fall a word or two, showing the impression the celestial laboratory produced upon me. I rather think I must own to the 'Rock of Ages' comparison. Thereupon the 'Man

of Letters,' so called, took his pipe from his mouth, and said that he didn't go in 'for sentiment and that sort of thing. Gush was played out.'

The Member of the Haouse, who, as I think, is not wanting in that homely good sense which one often finds in plain people from the huckleberry districts, but who evidently supposes the last speaker to be what he calls 'a tahlented mahn,' looked a little puzzled. My remark seemed natural and harmless enough to him, I suppose, but I had been distinctly snubbed, and the Member of the Haouse thought I must defend myself, as is customary in the deliberative body to which he belongs, when one gentleman accuses another gentleman of mental weakness or obliquity. I could not make up my mind to oblige him at that moment by showing fight. I suppose that would have pleased my assailant, as I don't think he has a great deal to lose, and might have made a little capital out of me if he could have got a laugh out of the Member or either of the dummies—I beg their pardon again, I mean the two undemonstrative boarders. But I will tell *you*, Beloved, just what I think about this matter.

We poets, you know, are much given to indulging in sentiment, which is a mode of consciousness at a discount just now with the new generation of analysts who are throwing everything into their crucibles. Now we must not claim too much for sentiment. It does not go a great way in deciding questions of arithmetic, or algebra, or geometry. Two and two will undoubtedly make four, irrespective of the emotions or other idiosyncrasies of the calculator; and the three angles of a triangle insist on being equal to two right angles in the face of the most impassioned rhetoric or the most inspired verse. But inasmuch as religion and law and the whole social order of civilized society, to say nothing of literature and art, are so founded on and pervaded by sentiment that they would all go to pieces without it, it is a word not to be used too lightly in passing judgment, as if it were an element to be thrown out or treated with small consideration. Reason may be the lever, but sentiment gives you the fulcrum and the place to stand on if you want to move the world. Even 'sentimentality,' which is sentiment overdone, is better than that affectation of superiority to human weakness which is only tolerable as one of the stage properties of full-grown cynicism; which particle and noun you can translate, if you happen to remember the derivation of the last of them, by a single familiar word. There is a great deal of false sentiment in the world, as there is of bad logic and erroneous doctrine; but it is very much less disagreeable to hear a young poet overdo his emotions, or even deceive himself about them, than to hear a caustic epithet-flinger repeating such words as 'sentimentality' and 'entusymusy'—one of the least

admirable of Lord Byron's bequests to our language—for the purpose of ridiculing him into silence. An over-dressed woman is not so pleasing as she might be, but at any rate she is better than the oil of vitriol squirter, whose profession it is to teach young ladies to avoid vanity by spoiling their showy silks and satins.

The Lady was the first of our party who was invited to look through the equatorial. Perhaps this world had proved so hard to her that she was pained to think that other worlds existed, to be homes of suffering and sorrow. Perhaps she was thinking it would be a happy change when she should leave this dark planet for one of those brighter spheres. She sighed, at any rate, but thanked the young astronomer for the beautiful sights he had shown her, and gave way to the next comer, who was That Boy, now in a state of irrepressible enthusiasm to see the Man in the Moon. He was greatly disappointed at not making out a colossal human figure moving round among the shining summits and shadowy ravines of the 'spotted globe.'

The Landlady came next and wished to see the moon also, in preference to any other object. She was astonished at the revelations of the powerful telescope. Was there any live creatures to be seen on the moon? she asked. The Young Astronomer shook his head, smiling a little at the question. Was there any meet'n'-houses? There was no evidence, he said, that the moon was inhabited. As there did not seem to be either air or water on its surface, the inhabitants would have a rather hard time of it, and if they went to meeting, the sermons would be apt to be rather dry. If there were a building on it as big as York minster, as big as the Boston Coliseum, the great telescopes like Lord Rosse's would make it out. But it seemed to be a forlorn place; those who had studied it most agreed in considering it a 'cold, crude, silent, and desolate' ruin of nature, without the possibility, if life were on it, of articulate speech, of music, even of sound. Sometimes a greenish tint was seen upon its surface, which might have been taken for vegetation, but it was thought not improbably to be a reflection from the vast forests of South America. The ancients had a fancy, some of them, that the face of the moon was a mirror in which the seas and shores of the earth were imaged. Now we know the geography of the side toward us about as well as that of Asia, better than that of Africa. The astronomer showed them one of the common small photographs of the moon. He assured them that he had received letters inquiring in all seriousness if these alleged lunar photographs were not really taken from a *peeled orange*. People had got angry with him for laughing at them for asking such a question. Then he gave them an account of the famous moon-hoax which came out, he believed, in 1835. It was full of the most bare-faced absurdities, yet people swallowed it all, and even Arago is



said to have treated it seriously as a thing that could not well be true, for Mr. Herschel would have certainly notified him of these marvellous discoveries. The writer of it had not troubled himself to invent probabilities, but had borrowed his scenery from the Arabian Nights and his lunar inhabitants from Peter Wilkins.

After this lecture the Capitalist stepped forward and applied his eye to the lens. I suspect it to have been shut most of the time, for I observe a good many elderly people adjust the organ of vision to any optical instrument in that way. I suppose it is from the instinct of protection to the eye, the same instinct as that which makes the raw militiaman close it when he pulls the trigger of his musket the first time. He expressed himself highly gratified, however, with what he saw, and retired from the instrument to make room for the Young Girl.

She threw her hair back and took her position at the instrument. Saint Simeon Stylites the Younger explained the wonders of the moon to her—Tycho and the grooves radiating from it, Kepler and Copernicus with their craters and ridges, and all the most brilliant shows of this wonderful little world. I thought he was more diffuse and more enthusiastic in his description than he had been with the older members of the party. I don't doubt the old gentleman who lived so long on the top of his pillar would have kept a pretty sinner (if he could have had an elevator to hoist her up to him) longer than he would have kept her grandmother. These young people are so ignorant, you know. As for our Scheherazade, her delight was unbounded, and her curiosity insatiable. If there were any living creatures there, what odd things they must be. They couldn't have any lungs nor any hearts. What a pity! Did they ever die? How could they expire if they didn't breathe? Burn up? No air to burn in. Tumble into some of those horrid pits, perhaps, and break all to bits. She wondered how the young people there liked it, or whether there were any young people there; perhaps nobody was young and nobody was old, but they were like mummies all of them—what an idea—two mummies making love to each other! So she went on in a rattling, giddy kind of way, for she was excited by the strange scene in which she found herself, and quite astonished the young astronomer with her vivacity. All at once she turned to him.

'Will you show me the double star you said I should see?'

'With the greatest pleasure,' he said, and proceeded to wheel the ponderous dome, and then to adjust the instrument, I think to the one in Andromeda, or that in Cygnus, but I should not know one of them from the other.

'How beautiful!' she said as she looked at the wonderful object.

'One is orange red and one is emerald green.'

The young man made an explanation in which he said something about complementary colours.

'Goodness!' exclaimed the Landlady. 'What! complimentary to our party?'

Her wits must have been a good deal confused by the strange sights of the evening. She had seen tickets marked *complimentary*, she remembered, but she could not for the life of her understand why our party should be particularly favoured at a celestial exhibition like this. On the whole, she questioned inwardly whether it might not be some subtle pleasantry, and smiled, experimentally, with a note of interrogation in the smile, but, finding no encouragement, allowed her features to subside gradually as if nothing had happened. I saw all this as plainly as if it had all been printed in great-primer type, instead of working itself out in her features. I like to see other people muddled now and then, because my own occasional dulness is relieved by a good solid background of stupidity in my neighbours.

'And the two revolve round each other?' said the Young Girl.

'Yes,' he answered, 'two suns, a greater and a less, each shining, but with a different light, for the other.'

'How charming! It must be so much pleasanter than to be alone in such a great empty space! I should think one would hardly care to shine if its light wasted itself in the monstrous solitude of the sky. Does not a single star seem very lonely to you up there?'

'Not more lonely than I am myself,' answered the Young Astronomer.

I don't know what there was in those few words, but I noticed that for a minute or two after they were uttered, I heard the ticking of the clockwork that moved the telescope as clearly as if we had all been holding our breath, and listening for the music of the spheres.

The Young Girl kept her eye closely applied to the eyepiece of the telescope a very long time, it seemed to me. Those double stars interested her a good deal, no doubt. When she looked off from the glass I thought both her eyes appeared very much as if they had been a little strained, for they were suffused and glistening. It may be that she pitied the lonely young man.

I know nothing in the world tenderer than the pity that a kind-hearted young girl has for a young man who feels lonely. It is true that these dear creatures are all compassion for every form of human woe, and anxious to alleviate all human misfortunes. They will go to Sunday-schools through storms their brothers are afraid of, to teach the most unpleasant and intractable classes of little children the age of Methuselah and the dimensions of Og the King of Bashan's bedstead. They will stand behind a table at a fair all day until they are ready to drop,

dressed in their prettiest clothes and their sweetest smiles, and lay hands upon you, like so many Lady Potiphars—perfectly correct ones, of course—to make you buy what you do not want at prices which you cannot afford ; all this as cheerfully as if it were not martyrdom to them as well as to you. Such is their love for all good objects, such their eagerness to sympathise with all their suffering fellow-creatures ! But there is nothing they pity as they pity a lonely young man.

I am sure I sympathise with her in this instance. To see a pale student burning away, like his own midnight lamp, with only dead men's hands to hold, stretched out to him from the sepulchres of books, and dead men's souls imploring him from their tablets to warm them over again just for a little while in a human consciousness, when all this time there are soft, warm, living hands that would ask nothing better than to bring the blood back into those cold thin fingers, and gently-caressing natures that would wind all their tendrils about the unawakened heart which knows so little of itself, is pitiable enough, and would be sadder still if we did not have the feeling that sooner or later the pale student will be pretty sure to feel the breath of a young girl against his cheek as she looks over his shoulder ; and that he will come all at once to an illuminated page in his book that never writer traced in characters, and never printer set up in type, and never binder enclosed within his covers ! But our young man seems farther away from life than any student whose head is bent downwards over his books. His eyes are turned away from all human things. How cold the moonlight is that falls upon his forehead, and how white he looks in it ! Will not the rays strike through to his brain at last, and send him to a narrower cell than this egg-shell dome which is his work-shop and his prison ?

I cannot say that the Young Astronomer seemed particularly impressed with a sense of his miserable condition. He said he was lonely, it is true, but he said it in a manly tone, and not as if he were repining at the inevitable condition of his devoting himself to that particular branch of science. Of course, he is lonely, the most lonely being that lives in the midst of our breathing world. If he would only stay a little longer with us when we get talking ; but he is busy almost always, either in observation or with his calculations and studies, and when the nights are fair looses so much sleep that he must make it up by day. He wants contact with human beings. I wish he would change his seat and come round and sit by our Scheherazade !

The rest of the visit went off well enough, except that the 'Man of Letters,' so called, rather snubbed some of the heavenly bodies as not quite up to his standard of brilliancy. I

thought myself that the double-star episode was the best part of it.

I have an unexpected revelation to make to the reader. Not long after our visit to the Observatory, the Young Astronomer put a package into my hands—a manuscript, evidently—which he said he would like to have me glance over. I found something in it which interested me, and told him the next day that I should like to read it with some care. He seemed rather pleased at this, and said that he wished I would criticise it as roughly as I liked, and if I saw anything in it which might be dressed to better advantage, to treat it freely, just as if it were my own production. It had often happened to him, he went on to say, to be interrupted in his observations by clouds covering the objects he was examining for a longer or shorter time. In these idle moments he had put down many thoughts, unskilfully he feared, but just as they came into his mind. His blank verse, he suspected, was often faulty. His thoughts he knew must be crude, many of them. It would please him to have me amuse myself by putting them into shape. He was kind enough to say that I was an artist in words, but he held himself as an unskilled apprentice.

I confess I was appalled when I cast my eye upon the title of the manuscript, 'Cirri and Nebulæ.'

'Oh! oh!' I said, 'that will never do. People don't know what Cirri are, at least, not one out of fifty readers. 'Wind-Clouds and Star-Drifts' will do better than that.'

'Anything you like,' he answered. 'What difference does it make how you christen a foundling? These are not my legitimate scientific offspring, and you may consider them left on your doorstep.'

I will not attempt to say just how much of the diction of these lines belongs to him, and how much to me. He said he would never claim them, after I read them to him in my version. I, on my part, do not wish to be held responsible for some of his more daring thoughts, if I should see fit to reproduce them hereafter. At this time I shall give only the first part of the series of poetical outbreaks for which the young devotee of science must claim his share of the responsibility. I may put some more passages into shape by-and-by.

#### WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

Another clouded night ; the stars are hid,  
The orb that waits my search is hid with them.  
Patience ! Why grudge an hour, a month, a year,  
To plant my ladder and to gain the round  
That leads my footsteps to the heaven of fame,  
Where waits the wreath my sleepless midnights won ?

Not the stained laurel such as heroes wear  
 That withers when some stronger conqueror's heel  
 Treads down their shrivelling trophies in the dust ;  
 But the fair garland whose undying green  
 Not time can change, nor wrath of gods or men !

With quickened heart-beats I shall hear the tongues  
 That speak my praise ; but better far the sense  
 That in the unshaped ages, buried deep  
 In the dark mines of unaccomplished time  
 Yet to be stamped with morning's royal die  
 And coined in golden days—in those dim years  
 I shall be reckoned with the undying dead,  
 My name emblazoned on the fiery arch,  
 Unfading till the stars themselves shall fade.  
 Then, as they call the roll of shining worlds,  
 Sages of race unborn in accents new  
 Shall count me with the Olympian ones of old,  
 Whose glories kindle through the midnight sky ;  
 Here glows the God of Battles ; this recalls  
 The Lord of Ocean, and yon far-off sphere  
 The Sire of Him who gave his ancient name  
 To the dim planet with the wondrous rings ;  
 Here flames the Queen of Beauty's silver lamp,  
 And there the moon-girt orb of mighty Jove ;  
 But *this*, unseen through all earth's æons past,  
 A youth who watched beneath the western star  
 Sought in the darkness, found, and showed to men ;  
 Linked with his name thenceforth and evermore !  
 So shall that name be syllabled anew  
 In all the tongues of all the tribes of men :  
 I that have been through immemorial years  
 Dust in the dust of my forgotten time  
 Shall live in accents shaped of blood-warm breath,  
 Yea, rise in mortal semblance, newly born  
 In shining stone, in undecaying bronze,  
 And stand on high, and look serenely down  
 On the new race that calls the earth its own.

Is this a cloud, that, blown athwart my soul,  
 Wears a false seeming of the pearly stain  
 Where worlds beyond the world their mingling rays  
 Blend in soft white—a cloud that, born of earth,  
 Would cheat the soul that looks for light from heaven ?  
 Must every coral-insect leave his sign  
 On each poor grain he lent to build the reef,  
 As Babel's builders stamped their sunburnt clay,  
 Or deem his patient service all in vain ?  
 What if another sit beneath the shade  
 Of the broad elm I planted by the way—  
 What if another heed the beacon light  
 I set upon the rock that wrecked my keel—  
 Have I not done my task and served my kind ?  
 Nay, rather act thy part, unnamed, unknown,  
 And let Fame blow her trumpet through the world  
 With noisy wind to swell a fool's renown,  
 Joined with some truth he stumbled blindly o'er,

Or coupled with some single shining deed  
 That in the great account of all his days  
 Will stand alone upon the bankrupt sheet  
 His pitying angel shows the clerk of Heaven.  
 The noblest service comes from nameless hands,  
 And the best servant does his work unseen.  
 Who found the seeds of fire and made them shoot,  
 Fed by his breath, in buds and flowers of flame?  
 Who forged in roaring flames the ponderous stone,  
 And shaped the moulded metal to his need?  
 Who gave the dragging car its rolling wheel,  
 And tamed the steed that whirls its circling round?  
 All these have left their work and not their names—  
 Why should I murmur at a fate like theirs?  
 This is the heavenly light; the pearly stain  
 Was but a wind-cloud drifting o'er the stars!

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## VI.

I FIND I have so many things in common with the Old Master of Arts, that I do not always know whether a thought was originally his or mine. That is what always happens where two persons of a similar cast of mind talk much together. And both of them gain by the interchange. Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up. That which was a weed in one intelligence becomes a flower in the other, and a flower, again, dwindles down to a mere weed by the same change. Healthy growth may become poisonous by falling upon the wrong mental soil, and what seemed a nightshade in one mind unfolds as a morning-glory in the other.

'I thank God,' the Master said, 'that a great many people believe a great deal more than I do. I think, when it comes to serious matters, I like those who believe more than I do better than those who believe less.'

'Why,' said I, 'you have got hold of one of my own working axioms. I should like to hear you develop it.'

The Member of the Haouse said he should be glad to listen to the debate. The gentleman had the floor. The Scarabee rose from his chair and departed. I thought his joints creaked as he straightened himself.

The Young Girl made a slight movement; it was a purely accidental coincidence, no doubt, but I saw That Boy put his hand in his pocket and pull out his popgun, and begin loading it. It cannot be that our Scheherazade, who looks so quiet and proper at the table, can make use of That Boy and his catapult

to control the course of conversation and change it to suit herself! She certainly looks innocent enough; but what does a blush prove, and what does its absence prove, on one of these innocent faces? There is nothing in all this world that can lie and cheat like the face and the tongue of a young girl. Just give her a little touch of hysteria—I don't mean enough of it to make her friends call the doctor in, but a slight hint of it in the nervous system—and 'Machiavel the waiting-maid' might take lessons of her. But I cannot think our Scheherazade is one of that kind, and I am ashamed of myself for noting such a trifling coincidence as that which excited my suspicion.

'I say,' the Master continued, 'that I had rather be in the company of those who believe more than I do, in spiritual matters at least, than of those who doubt what I accept as a part of my belief.'

'To tell the truth,' said I, 'I find that difficulty sometimes in talking to you. You have not quite so many hesitations as I have in following out your logical conclusions. I suppose you would bring some things out into daylight questioning that I had rather leave in the twilight of half-belief peopled with shadows, if they are only shadows, more sacred to me than many realities.'

'There is nothing I do not question,' said the Master: 'I not only begin with the precept of Descartes, but I hold all my opinions involving any chain of reasoning always open to revision.'

I confess that I smiled internally to hear him say that. The Old Master thinks he is open to conviction on all subjects; but if you meddle with some of his notions and don't get tossed on his horns as if a bull had hold of you, I should call you lucky.

'You don't mean you doubt everything?' I said.

'What do you think I question everything for,' the Master replied, 'if I never get any answers? You've seen a blind man with a stick, feeling his way along? Well I am a blind man with a stick, and I find the world pretty full of men just as blind as I am, but without any stick. I try the ground to find out whether it is firm or not before I rest my weight on it; but after it has borne my weight, that question at least is answered. It very certainly was strong enough once; the presumption is that it is strong enough now. Still, the soil may have been undermined, or I may have grown heavier. Make as much of that as you will. I say I question everything; but if I find Bunker Hill Monument standing as straight as when I leaned against it a year or ten years ago, I am not very much afraid that Bunker Hill will cave in if I trust myself again on the soil of it.'

I glanced off, as one often does in talk.

'The Monument is an awful place to visit,' I said. 'The waves of time are like the waves of the ocean; the only thing they beat against without destroying it is a rock; and they



destroy that at last. But it takes a good while. There is a stone now standing in very good order that was as old as a monument of Louis XIV. and Queen Anne's day is now when Joseph went down into Egypt. Think of the shaft on Bunker Hill standing in the sunshine on the morning of January 1st, in the year 5872!

'It won't be standing,' the Master said. 'We are poor bunglers compared to those old Egyptians. There are no joints in one of their obelisks. They are our masters in more ways than we know of, and in more ways than some of us are willing to know. That old Lawgiver wasn't learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians for nothing. It scared people well a couple of hundred years ago when Sir John Marsham and Dr. John Spencer ventured to tell their stories about the sacred ceremonies of the Egyptian priesthood. People are beginning to find out now that you can't study any religion by itself to any good purpose. You must have comparative theology as you have comparative anatomy. What would you make of a cat's foolish little good-for-nothing collar-bone, if you did not know how the same bone means a good deal in other creatures—in yourself, for instance, as you'll find out if you break it. You can't know too much of your race and its beliefs, if you want to know anything about your Maker. I never found but one sect large enough to hold the whole of me.'

'And may I ask what that was?' I said.

'The Human sect,' the Master answered. 'That has about room enough for me—at present, I mean to say.'

'Including cannibals and all?' said I.

'Oh, as to that, the *eating* of one's kind is a matter of taste, but the *roasting* of them has been rather more a speciality of our own particular belief than of any other I am acquainted with. If you broil a saint, I don't see why, if you have a mind, you shouldn't serve him up at your——'

Pop! went the little piece of artillery. Don't tell me it was accident. I know better. You can't suppose for one minute that a boy like that one would time his interruptions so cleverly. Now it so happened that at that particular moment *Dr. B. Franklin was not at the table*. You may draw your own conclusions. I say nothing, but I think a good deal.

I came back to the Bunker Hill Monument. 'I often think,' I said, 'of the dynasty which is to reign in its shadow for some thousands of years, it may be.'

The 'Man of Letters,' so called, asked me, in a tone I did not exactly like, whether I expected to live long enough to see a monarchy take the place of a republic in this country.

'No,' said I; 'I was thinking of something very different. I was indulging in a fancy of mine about the Man who is to sit at the foot of the monument for one or it may be two or three

thousand years. As long as the monument stands and there is a city near it, there will always be a man to take the names of visitors and extract some small tribute from their pockets, I suppose. I sometimes get thinking of the long, unbroken succession of these men, until they come to look like one Man : continuous in being, unchanging as the stone he watches, looking upon the successive generations of human beings as they come and go, and outliving all the dynasties of the world in all probability. It has come to such a pass that I never speak to the Man of the Monument without wanting to take my hat off and feeling as if I were looking down a vista of twenty or thirty centuries.'

The 'Man of Letters,' so called, said, in a rather contemptuous way, I thought, that he hadn't got so far as that. He wasn't quite up to moral reflections on toll-men and ticket-takers. Sentiment wasn't his tap.

He looked round triumphantly for a response : but the Capitalist was a little hard of hearing just then ; the Registrar of Deeds was browsing on his food in the calm bovine abstraction of a quadruped, and paid no attention ; the Salesman had bolted his breakfast, and whisked himself away with that peculiar alacrity which belongs to the retail-dealer's assistant ; and the Member of the House, who had sometimes seemed to be impressed with his 'tahlented mahn's' air of superiority to the rest of us, looked as if he thought the speaker was not exactly parliamentary. So he failed to make his point, and reddened a little, and was not in the best humour, I thought, when he left the table. I hope he will not let off any of his irritation on our poor little Scheherazade ; but the truth is, the first person one of this sort of man (if he is what I think him) meets, when he is out of humour, has to be made a victim of, and I only hope our Young Girl will not have to play Jephthah's daughter.

And that leads me to say, I cannot help thinking that the kind of criticism to which this Young Girl has been subjected from some person or other, who is willing to be smart at her expense, is hurtful and not wholesome. The question is a delicate one. So many foolish persons are rushing into print, that it requires a kind of literary police to hold them back and keep them in order. Where there are mice there must be cats, and where there are rats, we may think it worth our while to keep a terrier, who will give them a shake and let them drop, with all the mischief taken out of them. But the process is a rude and cruel one at best, and it too often breeds a love of destructiveness for its own sake in those who get their living by it. A poor poem or essay does not do much harm, after all ; nobody reads it who is like to be seriously hurt by it. But a sharp criticism, with a drop of witty venom in it, stings a young author almost to death, and makes an old one uncomfortable to no purpose.

If it were my business to sit in judgment on my neighbours, I would try to be courteous at least to those who had done any good service, but above all, I would handle tenderly those young authors who are coming before the public in the flush of their first or early appearance and are in the trembling delirium of stage-fright already. Before you write that brilliant notice of some alliterative Angelina's book of verses, I wish you would try this experiment.

Take half a sheet of paper and copy upon it any of Angelina's stanzas—the ones you were going to make fun of, if you will. Now go to your window, if it is a still day, open it, and let the half sheet of paper drop on the outside. How gently it falls through the soft air, always tending downwards, but sliding softly, from side to side, wavering, hesitating, balancing, until it settles as noiselessly as a snow-flake upon the all-receiving bosom of the earth! Just such would have been the fate of poor Angelina's fluttering effort, if you had left it to itself. It would have slanted downward into oblivion so sweetly and softly that she would have never known when it reached that harmless consummation.

Our *epizoaic* literature is becoming so extensive that nobody is safe from its *ad infinitum* progeny. A man writes a book of criticisms. A Quarterly Review criticises the critic. A Monthly Magazine takes up the critic's critic. A Weekly Journal criticises the critic of the critic's critic, and a Daily Paper favours us with some critical remarks on the performance of the writer in the Weekly, who has criticised the critical notice in the Monthly of the critical essay in the Quarterly on the critical work we started with. And thus we see that as each flea 'has smaller fleas that on him prey,' even the critic himself cannot escape the common lot of being bitten. Whether all this is a blessing or a curse, like that one which made Pharaoh and all his household run to their toilet-tables, is a question about which opinions might differ. The physiologists of the time of Moses—if there were vivisectioners other than priests in those days—would probably have considered that other plague, of the frogs, as a fortunate opportunity for science, as this poor little beast has been the *souffre-douleur* of experimenters and schoolboys from time immemorial.

But there is a form of criticism to which none will object. It is impossible to come before a public so alive with sensibilities as this we live in, with the smallest evidence of a sympathetic disposition, without making friends in a very unexpected way. Everywhere there are minds tossing on the unquiet waves of doubt. If you confess to the same perplexities and uncertainties that torture them, they are grateful for your companionship. If you have groped your way out of the wilderness in which you were once wandering with them, they

will follow your footsteps, it may be, and bless you as their deliverer.

So, all at once, a writer finds he has a parish of devout listeners, scattered, it is true, beyond the reach of any summons but that of a trumpet like the archangel's, to whom his slight discourse may be of more value than the exhortations they hear from the pulpit, if these last do not happen to suit their special needs. Young men with more ambition and intelligence than force of character, who have missed their first steps in life and are stumbling irresolute amidst vague aims and changing purposes, hold out their hands, imploring to be led into, or at least pointed towards, some path where they can find a firm foothold. Young women born into a chilling atmosphere of circumstance which keeps all the buds of their nature unopened, and always striving to get to a ray of sunshine, if one finds its way to their neighbourhood, tell their stories, sometimes simply and touchingly, sometimes in a more or less affected and rhetorical way, but still stories of defeated and disappointed instincts which ought to make any moderately impressible person feel very tenderly toward them.

In speaking privately to these young persons, many of whom have literary aspirations, one should be very considerate of their human feelings. But addressing them collectively a few plain truths will not give any one of them much pain. Indeed, almost every individual among them will feel sure that he or she is an exception to those generalities which apply so well to the rest.

If I were a literary Pope sending out an Encyclical, I would tell these inexperienced persons that nothing is so frequent as to mistake an ordinary human gift for a special and extraordinary endowment. The mechanism of breathing and that of swallowing are very wonderful, and if one had seen and studied them in his own person only, he might well think himself a prodigy. Everybody knows these and other bodily faculties are common gifts ; but nobody except editors and school-teachers and here and there a literary man knows how common is the capacity of rhyming and prattling in readable prose, especially among young women of a certain degree of education. In my character of Pontiff, I should tell these young persons that most of them laboured under a delusion. It is very hard to believe it ; one feels so full of intelligence, and so decidedly superior to one's dull relations and schoolmates ; one writes so easily and the lines sound so prettily to one's self ; there are such felicities of expression, just like those we hear quoted from the great poets ; and besides, one has been told by so many friends that all one had to do was to print and be famous ! Delusion, my poor dear, delusion at least nineteen times out of twenty, yes, ninety-nine times in a hundred.

but I told him which way to head, and to my surprise he promised to do just as I directed, and I do not doubt is under full sail at this moment.

What if I should tell my last, my very recent experience with the other sex? I received a paper containing the inner history of a young woman's life, the evolution of her consciousness from its earliest record of itself, written so thoughtfully, so sincerely, with so much firmness and yet so much delicacy, with such truth of detail and such grace in the manner of telling, that I finished the long manuscript almost at a sitting, with a pleasure rarely, almost never, experienced in voluminous communications which one has to spell out of handwriting. This was from a correspondent who made my acquaintance by letter when she was little more than a child, some years ago. How easy at that early period to have silenced her by indifference, to have wounded her by a careless epithet, perhaps even to have crushed her as one puts his heel on a weed! A very little encouragement kept her from despondency, and brought back one of those overflows of gratitude which makes one more ashamed of himself for being so overpaid, than he would be for having committed any of the lesser sins. But what pleased me most in the paper lately received was to see how far the writer had outgrown the need of any encouragement of mine; that she had strengthened out of her tremulous questionings into a self-reliance and self-poise which I had hardly dared to anticipate for her. Some of my readers who are also writers have very probably had more numerous experiences of this kind than I can lay claim to; self-revelations from unknown and sometimes nameless friends, who write from strange corners where the winds have wafted some stray words of theirs which have lighted in the minds and reached the hearts of those to whom they were as the angel that stirred the pool of Bethesda. Perhaps this is the best reward authorship brings; it may not imply much talent or literary excellence, but it means that your way of thinking and feeling is just what some one of your fellow-creatures needed.

I have been putting into shape, according to his request, some further passages from the young Astronomer's manuscript, some of which the reader will have a chance to read if he is so disposed. The conflict in the young man's mind between the desire for fame and the sense of its emptiness as compared with nobler aims has set me thinking about the subject from a somewhat humbler point of view. As I am in the habit of telling you, Beloved, many of my thoughts, as well as of repeating what was said at our table, you may read what follows as if it were addressed to you in the course of an ordinary conversation, where I claimed rather more than my share, as I am afraid I am a little in the habit of doing.

I suppose we all, those of us who write in verse or prose, have the habitual feeling that we should like to be remembered. It is to be awake when all of those who were round us have been long wrapped in slumber. It is a pleasant thought enough, that the name by which we have been called shall be familiar on the lips of those who come after us, and the thoughts that wrought themselves out in our intelligence, the emotions that trembled through our frames, shall live themselves over again in the minds and hearts of others.

But is there not something of rest, of calm, in the thought of gently and gradually fading away out of human remembrance? What line have we written that was on a level with our conceptions? What page of ours that does not betray some weakness we would fain have left unrecorded? To be to me a classic and share the life of a language is to be ever open to criticisms, to comparisons, to the caprices of suggestive generations, to be called into court and stand a trial before a new jury, once or more than once in every century. To be forgotten is to sleep in peace with the undisturbed myriads, no longer subject to the chills, and heats, the blasts, the sleet, the dust, which assail in endless succession that shadow of a man which we call his reputation. The line which dying we would wish to blot has been blotted out for us by a hand so tender, so patient, so used to its kindly task, that the page looks as fair as if it had never borne the record of our infirmity or our transgression. And then so few would be wholly content with their legacy of fame. You remember poor Monsieur Jacques's complaint of the favouritism shown to Monsieur Berthier—it is in that exquisite 'Week in a French Country-House.' 'Have you seen his room? Have you seen how large it is? Twice as large as mine! He has two jugs, a large one and a little one. I have only one small one. And a tea-service and a gilt Cupid on the top of his looking-glass.' The famous survivor of himself has had his features preserved in a medallion, and the slice of his countenance seems clouded with the thought that it does not belong to a bust; the bust ought to look happy in its niche, but the statue opposite makes it feel as if it had been cheated out of half its personality, and the statue looks uneasy because another stands on a loftier pedestal. But 'Ignotus' and 'Miserrimus' are of the great majority in that vast assembly, that House of Commons whose members are all peers, where to be forgotten is the standing rule. The dignity of a silent memory is not to be undervalued. Fame is after all a kind of rude handling, and a name that is often on vulgar lips seems to borrow something not to be desired, as the paper money that passes from hand to hand gains somewhat which is a loss thereby. O sweet, tranquil refuge of oblivion, so far as earth is concerned, for us poor blundering, stammering, misbehaving creatures who cannot turn over a leaf

of our life's diary without feeling thankful that its failure can no longer stare us in the face ! Not unwelcome shall be the baptism of dust which hides for ever the name that was given in the baptism of water ! We shall have good company whose names are left unspoken by posterity. ' Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that stand remembered in the known account of time ? The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been ; to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century.'

I have my moods about such things, as the young Astronomer has, as we all have. There are times when the thought of becoming utterly nothing to the world we knew so well and loved so much is painful and oppressive ; we gasp as if in a vacuum, missing the atmosphere of life we have so long been in the habit of breathing. Not the less are there moments when the aching need of repose comes over us and the *requiescat in pace*, heathen benediction as it is, sounds more sweetly in our ears than all the promises that Fame can hold out to us.

I wonder whether it ever occurred to you to reflect upon another horror there must be in leaving a name behind you. Think what a horrid piece of work the biographers make of a man's private history ! Just imagine the subject of one of those extraordinary fictions called biographies coming back and reading the life of himself, written very probably by somebody or other who thought he could turn a penny by doing it, and have the pleasure of seeing

' His little bark attendant sail,  
Pursue the triumph and partake the gale.'

The ghost of the person condemned to walk the earth in a biography glides into a public library, and goes to the shelf where his mummied life lies in its paper cerements. I can see the pale shadow glancing through the pages and hear the comments that shape themselves in the bodiless intelligence as if they were made vocal by living lips.

" Born in *July*, 1776 ! " And my honoured father killed at the battle of Bunker Hill ! Atrocious libeller ! to slander one's family at the start after such a fashion !

" The death of his parents left him in charge of his Aunt Nancy, whose tender care took the place of those parental attentions which should have guided and protected his infant years, and consoled him for the severity of another relative."

' Aunt *Nancy* ! It was Aunt *Betsy*, you fool ! Aunt Nancy used to—she has been dead these eighty years, so there is no use



in mincing matters—she used to keep a bottle and a stick, and when she had been tasting a drop out of the bottle the stick used to come off of the shelf and I had to taste that. And here she is made a saint of, and poor Aunt Betsy, that did everything for me, is slandered by implication as a horrid tyrant !

“ The subject of this commemorative history was remarkable for a precocious development of intelligence. An old nurse who saw him at the very earliest period of his existence is said to have spoken of him as one of the most promising infants she had seen in her long experience. At school he was equally remarkable, and at a tender age he received a paper adorned with a cut, inscribed REWARD OF MERIT.”

‘ I don’t doubt the nurse said that—there were several promising children born about that time. As for *cuts*, I got more from the schoolmaster’s rattan than in any other shape. Didn’t one of ’em split a Gunter’s scale into three pieces over the palm of my hand ? And didn’t I grin when I saw the pieces fly ? No humbug, now, about my boyhood !

“ His personal appearance was not singularly prepossessing. Inconspicuous in stature and unattractive in features——”

‘ You misbegotten son of an ourang and grandson of an ascidian’ (ghosts keep up with science, you observe), ‘ what business have you to be holding up my person to the contempt of my posterity ? Haven’t I been sleeping for this many a year in quiet, and don’t the dandelions and buttercups look as yellow over me as over the best-looking neighbour I have in the dormitory ? Why do you want to people the minds of everybody that reads your good-for-nothing libel which you call a “ biography ” with your impudent caricatures of a man who was a better-looking fellow than yourself, I’ll bet you ten to one, a man whom his Latin tutor called *formosus puer* when he was only a freshman ?’ If that’s what it means to make a reputation—to leave your character and your person, and the good name of your sainted relatives, and all you were, and all you had and thought and felt, so far as can be gathered by digging you out of your most private records, to be manipulated and bandied about and cheapened in the literary market as a chicken or a turkey or a goose is handled and bargained over at a provision stall, isn’t it better to be content with the honest blue slate-stone and its inscription informing posterity that you were a worthy citizen and a respected father of a family ?

I should like to see any man’s biography with corrections and emendations by his ghost. We don’t know each other’s secrets quite so well as we flatter ourselves we do. We don’t always know our own secrets as well as we might. You have seen a tree with different grafts upon it, an apple or pear tree we will say. In the late summer months the fruit on one bough will ripen ; I remember just such a tree, and the early ripening fruit

was the Jargonelle. By and by the fruit of another bough will begin to come into condition ; the lovely Saint Michael, as I remember, grew on the same stock as the Jargonelle in the tree I am thinking of ; and then, when these have all fallen or been gathered, another, we will say the Winter Nelis, has its turn, and so, out of the same juices have come in succession fruits of the most varied aspects and flavours. It is the same thing with ourselves, but it takes us a long while to find it out. The various inherited instincts ripen in succession. You may be nine-tenths paternal at one period of your life, and nine-tenths maternal at another. All at once the traits of some immediate ancestor may come to maturity unexpectedly on one of the branches of your character, just as your features at different periods of your life betray different resemblances to your nearer or more remote relatives.

But I want you to let me go back to the Bunker Hill Monument and the dynasty of twenty or thirty centuries whose successive representatives are to sit in the gate, like the Jewish monarchs, while the people shall come by hundreds and by thousands to visit the memorial shaft until the story of Bunker Hill is as old as that of Marathon.

Would not one like to attend twenty consecutive *soirées*, at each one of which the lion of the party should be the Man of the Monument, at the beginning of each century, all the way, we will say, from Anno Domini 2000 to Ann. Dom. 4000,—or, if you think the style of dating will be changed, say to Ann. Darwinii (we can keep A.D. you see) 1872 ? Will the Man be of the Indian type, as President Samuel Stanhope Smith and others have supposed the transplanted European will become by-and-by ? Will he have shortened down to four feet and a little more, like the Esquimaux, or will he have been bred up to seven feet by the use of new chemical diets, ozonized and otherwise improved atmospheres, and animal fertilizers ? Let us summon him in imagination and ask him a few questions.

Isn't it like splitting a toad out of a rock to think of this man of nineteen or twenty centuries hence coming out from his stony dwelling-place and speaking with us ? What are the questions we should ask him ? He has but a few minutes to stay. Make out your own list ; I will set down a few that come up to me as I write.

‘ What is the prevalent religious creed of civilization ? ’

‘ Has the planet met with any accident of importance ? ’

‘ How general is the republican form of government ? ’

‘ Do men fly yet ? ’

‘ Has the universal language come into use ? ’

‘ Is there a new fuel since the English coal-mines have given out ? ’

‘ Is the euthanasia a recognised branch of medical science ? ’

'Is the oldest inhabitant still living?'

'Is the *Daily Advertiser* still published?'

'And the *Evening Transcript* ?'

'Is there much inquiry for the works of a writer of the nineteenth century (Old Style) by—the—name—of—of——'

My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth. I cannot imagine the putting of that question without feeling the tremors which shake a wooer as he falters out the words that make him happy or wretched.

Whose works was I going to question him about, do you ask me?

Oh, the writings of a friend of mine, much esteemed by his relatives and others. But it's of no consequence, after all; I think he says he does not care much for posthumous reputation.

I find something of the same interest in thinking about one of the boarders at our table that I find in my waking dreams concerning the Man of the Monument. This personage is the Registrar of Deeds. He is an unemotional character, living in his business almost as exclusively as the Scarabee, but without any of that eagerness and enthusiasm which belongs to our scientific specialist. His work is largely, principally, I may say, mechanical. He has developed, however, a certain amount of taste for the antiquities of his departments, and once in a while brings out some curious results of his investigations into ancient documents. He, too, belongs to a dynasty which will last as long as there is such a thing as property in land and dwellings. When that is done away with, and we return to the state of villainage, holding our tenement-houses, all to be of the same pattern, of the State—that is to say, of the Tammany Ring which is to take the place of the feudal lord—the office of Registrar of Deeds will, I presume, become useless, and the dynasty will be deposed.

As we grow older we think more and more of old persons and of old things and places. As to old persons, it seemed as if we never knew how much they had to tell until we are old ourselves and they have been gone twenty or thirty years. Once in a while we come upon some survivor of his or her generation that we have overlooked, and feel as if we had recovered one of the lost books of Livy or fished up the golden candlestick from the ooze of the Tiber. So it was the other day, after my reminiscences of the old gambrel-roofed house and its visitors. They found an echo in the recollections of one of the brightest and liveliest of my suburban friends, whose memory is exact about everything except her own age, which, there can be no doubt, she makes out a score or two of years more than it really is. Still, she was old enough to touch some lights—and a shadow or two—into the portraits I had drawn, which made me wish that she and not I had been the artist who sketched the pictures. Among the lesser

regrets that mingle with graver sorrows for the friends of an earlier generation we have lost, are our omissions to ask them so many questions they could have answered so easily, and would have been so pleased to be asked. There ! I say to myself sometimes, in an absent mood, I must ask *her* about that. But she of whom I am now thinking has long been beyond the reach of any earthly questioning, and I sigh to think how easily I could have learned some fact which I should have been happy to have transmitted with pious care to those who are to come after me. How many times I have heard her quote the line about blessings brightening as they take their flight, and how true it proves in many little ways that one never thinks of until it is too late !

The Registrar of Deeds is not himself advanced in years. But he borrows an air of antiquity from the ancient records which are stored in his sepulchral archives. I love to go to his ossuary of dead transactions, as I would visit the catacombs of Rome or Paris. It is like wandering up the Nile to stray among the shelves of his monumental folios. Here stands a series of volumes, extending over a considerable number of years, all which volumes are in his handwriting. But as you go backward there is a break, and you come upon the writing of another person, who was getting old apparently, for it is beginning to be a little shaky, and then you know that you have gone back as far as the last days of his predecessor. Thirty or forty years more carry you to the time when this incumbent began the duties of his office ; his hand was steady then ; and the next volume beyond it in date betrays the work of a still different writer. All this interests me, but I do not see how it is going to interest my reader. I do not feel very happy about the Registrar of Deeds. What can I do with him ? Of what use is he going to be in my record of what I have seen and heard at the breakfast-table ? The fact of his being one of the boarders was not so important that I was obliged to speak of him, and I might just as well have drawn on my imagination and not allowed this dummy to take up the room which another guest might have profitably filled at our breakfast-table.

I suppose he will prove a superfluity, but I have got him on my hands, and I mean that he shall be as little in the way as possible. One always comes across people in actual life who have no particular business to be where we find them, and whose right to be at all is somewhat questionable.

I am not going to get rid of the Registrar of Deeds by putting him out of the way ; but I confess I do not see what service he is going to be of to me in my record. I have often found, however, that the Disposer of men and things understands much better than we do how to place his pawns and other pieces on the chess-board of life. A fish more or less in the ocean does

not seem to amount to much. It is not extravagant to say that any one fish may be considered a supernumerary. But when Captain Coram's ship sprung a leak and the carpenter could not stop it, and the passengers had made up their minds that it was all over with them, all at once, without any apparent reason, the pumps began gaining on the leak, and the sinking ship to lift herself out of the abyss which was swallowing her up. And what do you think it was that saved the ship, and Captain Coram, and so in due time gave to London that Foundling Hospital which he endowed, and under the floor of which he lies buried? Why, it was that very supernumerary fish, which we held of so little account, but which had wedged itself into the rent of the yawning planks, and served to keep out the water until the leak was finally stopped.

I am, very sure it was Captain Coram, but I almost hope it was somebody else, in order to give some poor fellow who is lying in wait for the periodicals a chance to correct me. That will make him happy for a month, and besides, he will not want to pick a quarrel about anything else if he has that splendid triumph. You remember Alcibiades and his dog's tail.

Here you have the extracts I spoke of from the manuscript placed in my hands for revision and emendation. I can understand these alternations of feeling in a young person who has been long absorbed in a single pursuit, and in whom the human instincts which have been long silent are now beginning to find expression. I know well what he wants; a great deal better, I think, than he knows himself.

## WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

### II.

Brief glimpses of the bright celestial spheres,  
False lights, false shadows, vague, uncertain gleams,  
Pale vaporous mists, wan streaks of lurid flame,  
The climbing of the upward-sailing cloud,  
The sinking of the downward-falling star,—  
All these are pictures of the changing moods  
Borne through the midnight stillness of my soul.

Here am I, bound upon this pillared-rock,  
Prey to the vulture of a vast desire  
That feeds upon my life. I burst my bands  
And steal a moment's freedom from the beak,  
The clinging talons and the shadowing plumes;  
Then comes the false enchantress, with her song:  
‘Thou wouldst not lay thy forehead in the dust  
Like the base herd that feeds and breeds and dies!  
Lo, the fair garlands that I weave for thee,  
Unchanging as the belt Orion wears,  
Bright as the jewels of the seven-starred Crown,  
The spangled stream of Berenice's hair!’

And so she twines the fetters with the flowers  
 Around my yielding limbs, and the fierce bird  
 Stoops to his quarry—then to feed his rage  
 Of ravening hunger I must drain my blood  
 And let the dew-drenched, poison-breeding night  
 Steal all the freshness from my fading cheek,  
 And leave its shadows round my caverned eyes.  
 All for a line in some unheeded scroll ;  
 All for a stone that tells to gaping clowns,  
 ' Here lies a restless wretch beneath a clod  
 Where squats the jealous nightmare men call Fame !

I marvel not at him who scorns his kind  
 And thinks not sadly of the time foretold  
 When the old hulk we tread shall be a wreck,  
 A slag, a cinder drifting through the sky  
 Without its crew of fools ! We live too long  
 And even so are not content to die,  
 But load the mould that covers up our bones  
 With stones that stand like beggars by the road  
 And show death's grievous wound and ask for tears ;  
 Write our great books to teach men who we are,  
 Sing our fine songs that tell in artful phrase  
 The secrets of our lives, and plead and pray  
 For alms of memory with the after time,  
 Those few swift seasons while the earth shall wear  
 Its leafy summers, 'ere its core grows cold  
 And the moist life of all that breathes shall die ;  
 Or as the new-born seer, perchance more wise,  
 Would have us deem, before its growing mass,  
 Pelted with star-dust, stoned with meteor-balls,  
 Heats like a hammered anvil, till at last  
 Man and his works, and all that stirred itself  
 Of its own motion, in the fiery glow  
 Turns to a flaming vapour, and our orb  
 Shines a new sun for earths that shall be born.

I am as old as Egypt to myself,  
 Brother to them that squared the pyramids  
 By the same stars I watch. I read the page  
 Where every letter is a glittering world,  
 With them who looked from Shinar's clay-built towers,  
 Ere yet the wanderer of the Midland sea  
 Had missed the fallen sister of the seven.  
 I dwell in spaces vague, remote, unknown,  
 Save to the silent few, who, leaving earth,  
 Quit all communion with their living time.  
 I lose myself in that ethereal void,  
 Till I have tired my wings and long to fill  
 My breast with denser air, to stand, to walk  
 With eyes not raised above my fellow-men.  
 Sick of my unwalled, solitary realm,  
 I ask to change the myriad lifeless worlds  
 I visit as mine own for one poor patch  
 Of this dull spheroid and a little breath  
 To shape in word or deed to save my kind.

Was ever giant's dungeon dug so deep,  
Was ever tyrant's fetter forged so strong,  
Was e'er such deadly poison in the draught  
The false wife mingles for the trusting fool,  
As he whose willing victim is himself,  
Digs, forges, mingles, for his captive soul?

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## VII.

I WAS very sure that the Old Master was hard at work about something—he is *always* very busy with something—but I mean something particular.

Whether it was a question of history or of cosmogony, or whether he was handling a test-pipe or a blow-pipe ; what he was about I did not feel sure ; but I took it for granted that it was some crucial question or other he was at work on, some point bearing on the thought of the time. For the Master, I have observed, is pretty sagacious in striking for the points where his work will be like to tell. We all know that class of scientific labourers to whom all facts are alike nourishing mental food, and who seem to exercise no choice whatever, provided only they can get hold of these same indiscriminate facts in quantity sufficient. They browse on them, as the animal to which they would not like to be compared browses on his thistles. But the Master knows the movement of the age he belongs to ; and if he seems to be busy with what looks like a small piece of trivial experimenting, one may feel pretty sure that he knows what he is about, and that his minute operations are looking to a result that will help him towards attaining his great end in life — an insight, so far as his faculties and opportunities will allow, into that order of things which he believes he can study with some prospect of taking in its significance.

I became so anxious to know what particular matter he was busy with, that I had to call upon him to satisfy my curiosity. It was with a little trepidation that I knocked at his door. I felt a good deal as one might have felt on disturbing an alchemist at his work, at the very moment, it might be, when he was about to make projection.

‘Come in !’ said the Master in his grave, massive tones.

I passed through the library with him into a little room evidently devoted to his experiments.

‘You have come just at the right moment,’ he said. ‘Your eyes are better than mine. I have been looking at this flask, and I should like to have you look at it.’

It was a small *matrass*, as one of the elder chemists would



have called it, containing a fluid, and hermetically sealed. He held it up at the window ; perhaps you remember the physician holding a flask to the light in Gerard Douw's 'Femme hydro-pique' ; I thought of that fine figure as I looked at him. 'Look,' said he, 'is it clear or cloudy ?'

'You need not ask me that,' I answered. 'It is very plainly turbid. I should think that some sediment had been shaken up in it. What is it, *Elixir Vita* or *Aurum potabile* ?'

'Something that means more than alchemy ever did ! Boiled just three hours, and as clear as a bell until within the last few days ; since then has been clouding up.'

I began to form a pretty shrewd guess at the meaning of all this, and to think very nearly what was coming next. I was right in my conjecture. The Master broke off the sealed end of his little flask, took out a small portion of the fluid on a glass rod, and placed it on a slip of glass in the usual way for a microscopic examination.

'One thousand diameters,' he said, as he placed it on the stage of the microscope. 'We shall find signs of life, of course.' He bent over the instrument and looked but an instant.

'There they are !' he exclaimed, 'look in.'

I looked in and saw some objects not very unlike these :



The straight linear bodies were darting backward and forward in every direction. The wavy ones were wriggling about like eels or water-snakes. The round ones were spinning on their axis and rolling in every direction. All of them were in a state of incessant activity, as if perpetually seeking something and never finding it.

'They are tough, the germs of these little bodies,' said the Master. 'Three hours' boiling hasn't killed 'em. Now, then, let us see what has been the effect of *six* hours' boiling.'

He took up another flask just like the first, containing fluid and hermetically sealed in the same way.

'Boiled just three hours longer than the other,' he said, 'six hours in all. This is the *experimentum crucis*. Do you see any cloudiness in it ?'

'Not a sign of it ; it is as clear as crystal, except that there may be a little sediment at the bottom.'

'That is nothing. The liquid is clear. We shall find no signs of life.' He put a minute drop of the liquid under the microscope as before. Nothing stirred. Nothing to be seen but a clear circle of light. We looked at it again and again, but with the same result.

'Six hours kill 'em all, according to this experiment,' said the Master. 'Good as far as it goes. One more negative result. Do you know what would have happened if that liquid had been clouded, and we had found life in the sealed flask? Sir, if that liquid had held life in it the Vatican would have trembled to hear it, and there would have been anxious questionings and ominous whisperings in the halls of Lambeth palace! The accepted cosmogonies on trial, sir! Traditions, sanctities, creeds, ecclesiastical establishments, all shaking to know whether my little six-penny flask of fluid looks muddy or not! I don't know whether to laugh or shudder. The thought of an œcumenical council having its leading feature dislocated by my trifling experiment! The thought, again, of the mighty revolution in human beliefs and affairs that might grow out of the same insignificant little phenomenon. A wineglassful of clear liquid growing muddy. If we had found a wriggle, or a zigzag, or a shoot from one side to the other, in this last flask, what a scare there would have been, to be sure, in the schools of the prophets! Talk about your *megatherium* and your *megalosaurus*—what are these to the *bacterium* and the *vibrio*? These are the dreadful monsters of to-day. If they show themselves where they have no business, the little rascals frighten honest folks worse than ever people were frightened by the Dragon of Rhodes!'

The Master gets going sometimes, there is no denying it, until his imagination runs away with him. He had been trying, as the reader sees, one of those curious experiments in spontaneous generation, as it is called, which have been so often instituted of late years, and by none more thoroughly than by that eminent American student of nature whose process he had imitated with a result like his.

We got talking over these matters among us the next morning at the breakfast-table.

'We must agree they couldn't stand six hour's boiling,' I said.

'Good for the Pope of Rome!' exclaimed the Master.

The Landlady drew back with a certain expression of dismay in her countenance. She hoped he didn't want the Pope to make any more converts in this country. She had heard a sermon only last Sabbath, and the minister had made it out she thought, as plain as could be, that the Pope was the Man of Sin and that the Church of Rome was—— Well, there was very strong names applied to her in Scripture.

'What was good for the Pope was good for your minister, too, my dear madam,' said the Master. 'Good for everybody that is afraid of what people call "science." If it should prove that dead things come to life of themselves, it would be awkward, you know, because then somebody will get up and say if one dead thing made itself alive another might, and so perhaps the

earth peopled itself without any help. Possibly the difficulty wouldn't be so great as many people suppose. We might perhaps find room for a Creator after all, as we do now, though we see a little brown seed grow till it sucks up the juices of half an acre of ground, apparently all by its own inherent power. That does not stagger us ; I am not sure that it would if Mr. Crosse's or Mr. Weeke's *acar*us should show himself all of a sudden, as they said he did, in certain mineral mixtures acted on by electricity.'

The Landlady was off soundings, and looking vacant enough by this time.

He turned to me.

'Don't think too much of the result of our one experiment. It means something, because it confirms those other experiments of which it was a copy ; but we must remember that a hundred negatives don't settle such a question. Life does get into the world somehow. You don't suppose Adam had the cutaneous unpleasantness politely called *psora* do you ?'

'Hardly,' I answered. 'He must have been a walking hospital if he carried all the maladies about him which have plagued his descendants.'

'Well, then, how did the little beast which is peculiar to that special complaint intrude himself into the order of things ? You don't suppose there was a special act of creation for the express purpose of bestowing that little wretch on humanity, do you ?'

I thought, on the whole, I wouldn't answer that question.

'You and I are at work on the same problem,' said the young Astronomer to the Master. 'I have looked into a microscope now and then, and I have seen that perpetual dancing about of minute atoms in a fluid, which you call molecular motion. Just so, when I look through my telescope I see the star-dust whirling about in the infinite expanse of ether ; or, if I do not see its motion, I know that it is on account of its immeasurable distance. Matter and motion everywhere ; void and rest nowhere. You ask why your restless microscopic atoms may not come together, and become self-conscious and self-moving organisms. I ask why my telescopic star-dust may not come together, and grow and organise into habitable worlds—the ripened fruit on the branches of the tree Yggdrasil, if I may borrow from our friend the Poet's province. It frightens people, though, to hear the suggestion that worlds shape themselves from star-mist. It does not trouble them at all to see the watery spheres that round themselves into being out of the vapours floating over us ; they are nothing but rain-drops. But if a planet can grow as a rain-drop grows, why then——. It was a great comfort to these timid folk when Lord Rosse's telescope resolved certain *nebulæ* into star-clusters. Sir John Herschel would have told them that

this made little difference in accounting for the formation of worlds by aggregation, but at any rate it was a comfort to them.'

'These people have always been afraid of the astronomers,' said the Master. 'They were shy, you know, of the Copernican system, for a long while; well they might be, with an *oubliette* waiting for them if they ventured to think that the earth moved round the sun. Science settled that point finally for them, at length, and then it was all right—when there was no use in disputing the fact any longer. By-and-by geology began turning up fossils that told extraordinary stories about the duration of life upon our planet. What subterfuges were not used to get rid of their evidence! Think of a man seeing the fossilized skeleton of an animal split out of a quarry, his teeth worn down by mastication, and the remains of food still visible in his interior, and, in order to get rid of a piece of evidence contrary to the traditions he holds to, seriously maintaining that this skeleton never belonged to a living creature, but was created with just these appearances; a make-believe, a sham, a Barnum's-mermaid contrivance to amuse its Creator and impose upon His intelligent children! And now people talk about geological epochs and hundreds of millions of years in the planet's history as calmly as if they were discussing the age of their deceased great-grandmothers. Ten or a dozen years ago people said Sh! Sh! if you ventured to meddle with any question supposed to involve a doubt of the generally-accepted Hebrew traditions. To-day such questions are recognised as perfectly fair subjects for general conversation; not in the basement story, perhaps, or among the rank and file of the curbstone congregations, but among intelligent and educated persons. You may preach about them in your pulpit, you may lecture about them, you may talk about them with the first sensible-looking person you happen to meet, you may write magazine articles about them, and the editor need not expect to receive remonstrances from angry subscribers and withdrawals of subscriptions, as he would have been sure to not a great many years ago. Why, you may go to a tea-party where the clergyman's wife shows her best cap, and his daughters display their shining ringlets, and you will hear the company discussing the Darwinian theory of the origin of the human race as if it were as harmless a question as that of the lineage of a spinster's lapdog. You may see a fine lady who is as particular in her genuflections as any Bhuddist or Mahometan saint in his manifestations of reverence, who will talk over the anthropoid ape, the supposed founder of the family to which we belong, and even go back with you to the acephalous mollusk, first cousin to the clams and mussels, whose rudimental spine was the hinted prophecy of humanity; all this time never dreaming, apparently, that what she takes for a matter of curious

speculation involves the whole future of human progress and destiny.'

I can't help thinking that if we had talked as freely as we can and do now in the days of the first boarder at this table—I mean the one who introduced it to the public—it would have sounded a good deal more aggressively than it does now. The Old Master got rather warm in talking ; perhaps the consciousness of having a number of listeners had something to do with it.

'This whole business is an open question,' he said, 'and there is no use in saying, "Hush ! don't talk about such things !" People do talk about 'em everywhere ; and, if they don't talk about 'em they think about 'em, and that is worse : if there is anything bad about such questions, that is. If for the Fall of man, science comes to substitute the RISE of man, sir, it means the utter disintegration of all the spiritual pessimisms which have been like a spasm in the heart and a cramp in the intellect of men for so many centuries. And yet who dares to say that it is not a perfectly legitimate and proper question to be discussed, without the slightest regard to the fears or the threats of Pope or prelate ?

'Sir, I believe,' the Master rose from his chair as he spoke, and said in a deep and solemn tone, but without any declamatory vehemence, 'sir, I believe that we are at this moment in what will be recognized not many centuries hence as one of the late watches in the night of the dark ages. There is a twilight ray, beyond question. We know something of the universe, a very little, and, strangely enough, we know most of what is farthest from us. We have weighed the planets and analyzed the flames of the sun and stars. We predict their movements as if they were machines we ourselves had made and regulated. We know a good deal about the earth on which we live. But the study of man has been so completely subjected to our pre-conceived opinions, that we have got to begin all over again. We have studied anthropology through theology ; we have now to begin the study of theology through anthropology. Until we have exhausted the human element in every form of belief, and that can only be done by what we may call comparative spiritual anatomy, we cannot begin to deal with the alleged extra-human elements without blundering into all imaginable puerilities. If you think for one moment that there is not a single religion in the world which does not come to us through the medium of a pre-existing language ; and if you remember that this language embodies absolutely nothing but human conceptions and human passions, you will see at once that every religion pre-supposes its own elements as already existing in those to whom it is addressed. I once went to a church in London and heard the famous Edward Irving preach, and heard some of his congrega-

tion speak in the strange words characteristic of their miraculous gift of tongues. I had a respect for the logical basis of this singular phenomenon. I have always thought it was natural that any celestial message should demand a language of its own, only to be understood by divine illumination. All human words tend, of course, to stop short in human meaning. And the more I hear the most sacred terms employed, the more I am satisfied that they have entirely and radically different meanings in the minds of those who use them. Yet they deal with them as if they were as definite as mathematical quantities or geometrical figures. What would become of arithmetic if the figure 2 meant three for one man and five for another and twenty for a third, and all the other numerals were in the same way variable quantities? Mighty intelligent correspondence business men would have with each other! But how is this any worse than the difference of opinion which led a famous clergyman to say to a brother theologian, "O, I see, my dear sir, your *God* is my *Devil*."

'Man has been studied proudly, contemptuously, rather, from the point of view supposed to be authoritatively settled. The self-sufficiency of egotistic natures was never more fully shown than in the expositions of the worthlessness and wretchedness of their fellow-creatures given by the dogmatists who have "gone back," as the vulgar phrase is, on their race, their own flesh and blood. Did you ever read what Mr. Bancroft says about Calvin in his article on Jonathan Edwards—and mighty well said it is too, in my judgment! Let me remind you of it, whether you have read it or not. "Setting himself up over against the privileged classes, he, *with a loftier pride than theirs*, revealed the power of a yet higher order of nobility, not of a registered ancestry of fifteen generations, but one absolutely spotless in its escutcheon, preordained in the council chamber of eternity." I think you'll find I have got that sentence right, word for word, and there's a great deal more in it than many good folks who call themselves after the reformer seem to be aware of. The Pope put his foot on the neck of kings, but Calvin and his cohort crushed the whole human race under their heels in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Now, you see, the point that people don't understand is the absolute and utter *humility* of science, in opposition to this doctrinal self-sufficiency. I don't doubt this may sound a little paradoxical at first, but I think you will find it is all right. You remember the courtier and the monarch—Louis the Fourteenth, wasn't it?—never mind, give the poor fellows that live by setting you right a chance. "What o'clock is it?" says the king. "Just whatever o'clock your Majesty pleases," says the courtier. I venture to say the monarch was a great deal more humble than the follower, who pretended that his master was superior to such trifling facts as the revolution of the

planet. It was the same thing, you remember, with King Canute and the tide on the sea-shore. The king accepted the scientific fact of the tide's rising. The loyal hangers-on, who believed in divine right, were too proud of the company they found themselves in to make any such humiliating admission. But there are people, and plenty of them, to-day, who will dispute facts just as clear to those who have taken the pains to learn what is known about them, as that of the tide's rising. They don't like to admit these facts, because they throw doubt upon some of their cherished opinions. We are getting on towards the last part of this nineteenth century. What we have gained is not so much in positive knowledge, though that is a good deal, as it is in the freedom of discussion of every subject that comes within the range of observation and inference. How long is it since Mrs. Piozzi wrote : " Let me hope that you will not pursue geology till it leads you into doubts destructive of all comfort in this world and all happiness in the next ?" '

The Master paused and I remained silent, for I was thinking things I could not say.

It is well always to have a woman near by when one is talking on this class of subjects. Whether there will be three or four women to one man in heaven is a question which I must leave to those who talk as if they knew all about the future condition of the race to answer. But very certainly there is much more of hearty faith, much more of spiritual life among women than among men in this world. They need faith to support them more than men do, for they have a great deal less to call them out of themselves, and it comes easier to them, for their habitual state of dependence teaches them to trust in others. When they become voters, if they ever do, it may be feared that the pews will lose what the ward-rooms gain. Relax a woman's hold on man, and her knee-joints will soon begin to stiffen. Self-assertion brings out many fine qualities, but it does not promote devotional habits.

I remember some such thoughts as this were passing through my mind while the Master was talking. I noticed that the Lady was listening to the conversation with a look of more than usual interest. We men have the talk mostly to ourselves at this table ; the Master, as you have found out, is fond of monologues, and I myself—well, I suppose I must own to a certain love for the reverberated music of my own accents ; at any rate, the Master and I do most of the talking. But others help us to do the listening. I think I can show that they listen to some purpose. I am going to surprise my reader with a letter which I received very shortly after the conversation took place which I have just reported. It is of course by a special license, such as *belongs to the supreme prerogative of an author*, that I am



enabled to present it to him. He need ask no questions : it is not his affair how I obtained the right to give publicity to a private communication. I have become somewhat more intimately acquainted with the writer of it than in the earlier period of my connection with this establishment, and I think I may say have gained her confidence to a very considerable degree.

‘ MY DEAR SIR,

‘ The conversations I have had with you, limited as they have been, have convinced me that I am quite safe in addressing you with freedom on a subject which interests me, and others more than myself. We at our end of the table have been listening, more or less intelligently, to the discussions going on between two or three of you gentlemen on matters of solemn import to us all. This is nothing very new to me. I have been used, from an early period of my life, to hear the discussion of grave questions, both in politics and religion. I have seen gentlemen at my father’s table get as warm over a theological point of dispute as in talking over their political differences. I rather think it has always been very much so, in bad as well as in good company ; for you remember how Milton’s fallen angels amused themselves with disputing on “ providence, fore-knowledge, will, and fate,” and it was the same thing in that club Goldsmith writes so pleasantly about. Indeed, why should not people very often come, in the course of conversation, to the one subject which lies beneath all else about which we occupy our thoughts ? And what more natural than that one should be inquiring about what another has accepted and ceased to have any doubts concerning ? It seems to me all right that *at the proper time, in the proper place*, those who are less easily convinced than their neighbours should have the fullest liberty to account all the opinions which others receive without question. Somebody must stand sentry at the outposts of belief, and it is a sentry’s business, I believe, to challenge every one who comes near him, friend or foe.

‘ I want you to understand fully that I am not one of those poor nervous creatures who are frightened out of their wits when any question is started that implies the disturbance of their old beliefs. I manage to see some of the periodicals, and now and then dip a little way into a new book which deals with these curious questions you were talking about, and others like them. You know they find their way almost everywhere. They do not worry me in the least. When I was a little girl, they used to say that if you put a horsehair into a tub of water it would turn into a snake in the course of a few days. That did not seem to me so very much stranger than it was that an egg should turn into a chicken. What can I say to *that* ? Only that it is the Lord’s

doings, and marvellous in my eyes ; and if our philosophical friend should find some little live creatures, or what seem to be live creatures, in any of his messes, I should say as much, and no more. You do not think I would shut up my Bible and Prayer-Book because there is one more thing I do not understand in a world where I understand so very little of all the wonders that surround me ?

‘ It may be very wrong to pay any attention to those speculations about the origin of mankind which seem to conflict with the Sacred Record. But perhaps there is some way of reconciling them, as there is of making the seven days of creation harmonize with modern geology. At least, these speculations are curious enough in themselves ; and I have seen so many good and handsome children come of parents who were anything but virtuous and comely, that I can believe in almost any amount of improvement taking place in a tribe of living beings, if time and opportunity favour it. I have read in books of natural history that dogs came originally from wolves. When I remember my little Flora, who, as I used to think, could do everything but talk, it does not seem to me that she was much nearer her savage ancestors than some of the horrid cannibal wretches are to their neighbours the great apes.

‘ You see that I am tolerably liberal in my habit of looking at all these questions. We women drift along with the current of the times, listening, in our quiet way, to the discussions going on round us in books and in conversation, and shift the phrases in which we think and talk with something of the same ease as that with which we change our style of dress from year to year. I doubt if you of the other sex know what an effect this habit of accommodating our *tastes* to changing standards has upon us. Nothing is fixed in them, as you know ; the very law of fashion is change. I suspect we learn from our dress-makers to shift the costume of our minds, and slip on the new fashions of thinking all the more easily because we have been accustomed to new styles of dressing every season.

‘ It frightens me to see how much I have written without having yet said a word of what I began this letter on purpose to say. I have taken so much space in “ defining my position,” to borrow the politician’s phrase, that I begin to fear you will be out of patience before you come to the part of my letter I care most about your reading.

‘ What I want to say is this. When these matters are talked about before persons of different ages and various shades of intelligence, I think one ought to be very careful that his use of *language* does not injure the sensibilities, perhaps blunt the reverential feelings, of those who are listening to him. You of

the sterner sex say that we women have intuitions, but not logic, as our birthright. I shall not commit my sex by conceding this to be true as a whole, but I will accept the first half of it, and I will go so far as to say that we do not always care to follow out a train of thought until it ends in a blind *cul de sac*, as some of what are called the logical people are fond of doing.

‘Now I want to remind you that religion is not a matter of intellectual luxury to those of us who are interested in it, but something very different. It is our life, and more than our life; for that is measured by pulse-beats, but our religious consciousness partakes of the Infinite, towards which it is constantly yearning. It is very possible that a hundred or five hundred years from now the *forms* of religious belief may be so altered that we should hardly know them. But the sense of dependence on Divine influence, and the need of communion with the unseen and eternal, will be then just what they are now. It is not the geologist’s hammer, or the astronomer’s telescope, or the naturalist’s microscope, that is going to take away the need of the human soul for that Rock to rest upon, which is higher than itself, that Star which never sets, that all-pervading Presence which gives life to all the least-moving atoms of the immeasurable universe.

‘I have no fears for myself, and listen very quietly to all your debates. I go from your philosophical discussions to the reading of Jeremy Taylor’s “Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying,” without feeling that I have unfitted myself in the least degree for its solemn reflections. And, as I have mentioned his name, I cannot help saying that I do not believe that good man himself would have ever shown the bitterness to those who seem to be at variance with the received doctrines, which one may see in some of the newspapers that call themselves “religious.” I have kept a few old books from my honoured father’s library, and among them there is another of his which I always thought had more true Christianity in its title than there is in a good many whole volumes. I am going to take the book down, or up—for it is not a little one—and write out the title, which, I dare say, you remember, and very likely you have the book, “Discourse of the Liberty of Prophesying, showing the Unreasonableness of prescribing to other Men’s Faith, and the Iniquity of persecuting Different Opinions.”

‘Now, my dear sir, I am sure you believe that I *want* to be liberal and reasonable, and not to act like those weak alarmists who, whenever the silly sheep begin to skip as if something was after them, and huddle together in their fright, are sure there must be a bear or a lion coming to eat them up. But for all that, I want to beg you to handle some of these points, which are so involved in the creed of a good many well-intentioned persons that you cannot separate them from it without picking

their whole belief to pieces, with more thought for them than you might think at first they were entitled to. I have no doubt you gentlemen are as wise as serpents, and I want you to be as harmless as doves.

‘The Young Girl who sits by me has, I know, strong religious instincts. Instead of setting her out to ask all sorts of questions, I would rather, if I had my way, encourage her to form a habit of attending to religious duties, and make the most of the simple faith in which she was bred. I think there are a good many questions young persons may safely postpone to a more convenient season ; and as this young creature is overworked, I hate to have her excited by the fever of doubt which it cannot be denied is largely prevailing in our time.

‘I know you must have looked on our other young friend, who has devoted himself to the sublimest of the sciences, with as much interest as I do. When I was a little girl I used to write out a line of Young’s as a copy in my writing-book :

“ An undevout astronomer is mad ” ;

but I do not now feel quite so sure that the contemplation of all the multitude of remote worlds does not tend to weaken the idea of a personal Deity. It is not so much that nebular theory which worries me, when I think about this subject, as a kind of bewilderment when I try to conceive of a consciousness filling all those frightful blanks of space they talk about. I sometimes doubt whether that young man worships anything but the stars. They tell me that many young students of science like him never see the inside of a church. I cannot help wishing they did. It humanises people, quite apart from any higher influence it exerts upon them. One reason, perhaps, why they do not care to go to places of worship is that they are liable to hear the questions they know something about handled in sermons by those who know very much less about them. And so they lose a great deal. Almost every human being, however vague his notions of the Power addressed, is capable of being lifted and solemnised by the exercise of public prayer. When I was a young girl we travelled in Europe, and I visited Ferney with my parents ; and I remember we all stopped before a chapel, and I read upon its front—I knew Latin enough to understand it, I am pleased to say—*Deo crexit Voltaire*. I never forgot it ; and knowing what a sad scoffer he was at most sacred things, I could not but be impressed with the fact that even he was not satisfied with himself, until he had shown his devotion in a public and lasting form.

‘We all want religion sooner or later. I am afraid there are some who have no natural turn for it, as there are persons without an ear for music, to which, if I remember right, I heard one of you comparing what you called religious genius. But sor-

row and misery bring even these to know what it means, in a great many instances. May I not say to you, my friend, that I am one who has learned the secret of the inner life by the discipline of trials in the life of outward circumstance? I can remember the time when I thought more about the shade of colour in a ribbon, whether it matched my complexion or not, than I did about my spiritual interests in this world or the next. It was needful that I should learn the meaning of the text, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

' Since I have been taught in the school of trial I have felt, as I never could before, how precious an inheritance is the smallest patrimony of faith. When everything seemed gone from me, I found I had still one possession. The bruised reed that I had never leaned on became my staff. The smoking flax which had been a worry to my eyes burst into flame, and I lighted the taper at it which has since guided all my footsteps. And I am but one of the thousands who have had the same experience. They have been through the depths of affliction, and know the needs of the human soul. It will find its God in the unseen—Father, Saviour, Divine Spirit, Virgin Mother—it must and will breathe its longings and its griefs into the heart of a Being capable of understanding all its necessities and sympathising with all its woes.

' I am jealous—yes, I own I am jealous—of any word, spoken or written, that would tend to impair that birthright of reverence which becomes for so many in after years the basis of a deeper religious sentiment. And yet, as I have said, I cannot and will not shut my eyes to the problems which may seriously affect our *modes* of conceiving the eternal truths on which, and by which, our souls must live. What a fearful time is this into which we poor sensitive and timid creatures are born! I suppose the life of every century has more or less special resemblance to that of some particular Apostle. I cannot help thinking this century has Thomas for its model. How do you suppose the other Apostles felt when that experimental philosopher explored the wounds of the Being who to them was divine with that inquisitive forefinger? In our time that finger has multiplied itself into ten thousand thousand implements of research, challenging all mysteries, weighing the world as in a balance, and sifting through its prisms and spectroscopes the light that comes from the throne of the Eternal.

' Pity us, dear Lord, pity us! The peace in believing which belonged to other ages is not for us. Again Thy wounds are opened that we may know whether it is the blood of one like ourselves which flows from them, or whether it is a Divinity that is bleeding for His creatures. Wilt Thou not take the doubt of Thy children, whom the time commands to *try all things*, in the place of the unquestioning faith of earlier and simpler-hearted

generations? We too have need of Thee. Thy martyrs in other ages were cast into the flames, but no fire could touch their immortal and indestructible faith. We sit in safety and in peace, so far as these poor bodies are concerned; but our cherished beliefs, the hopes, the trust that stayed the hearts of those we loved who have gone before us, are cast into the fiery furnace of an age which is fast turning to dross the certainties and the sanctities once prized as our most precious inheritance.

‘You will understand me, my dear sir, and all my solitudes and apprehensions. Had I never been assailed by the questions that meet all thinking persons in our time, I might not have thought so anxiously about the risk of perplexing others. I know as well as you must that there are many articles of belief clinging to the skirts of our time which are the bequests of the ages of ignorance that God winked at. But for all that I would train a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, according to the simplest and best creed I could disentangle from those barbarisms, and I would in every way try to keep up in young persons that standard of reverence for all sacred subjects which may, without any violent transition, grow and ripen into the devotion of later years.

‘Believe me,

‘Very sincerely yours,

‘———’

I have thought a good deal about this letter and the writer of it lately. She seemed at first removed to a distance from all of us, but here I find myself in somewhat near relations with her. What has surprised me more than that, however, is to find that she is becoming so much acquainted with the Registrar of Deeds. Of all persons in the world, I should least have thought of him as like to be interested in her, and still less, if possible, of her fancying him. I can only say they have been in pretty close conversation several times of late, and, if I dared to think it of so very calm and dignified a personage, I should say that her colour was a little heightened after one or more of these interviews. No! that would be too absurd! But I begin to think nothing is absurd in the matter of the relations of the two sexes; and if this high-bred woman fancies the attentions of a piece of human machinery like this elderly individual, it is none of my business.

I have been at work on some more of the Young Astronomer's lines. I find less occasion for meddling with them as he grows more used to versification. I think I could analyse the processes going on in his mind, and the conflict of instincts which he cannot in the nature of things understand.

But it is as well to give the reader a chance to find out for himself what is going on in the young man's heart and intellect.

## WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

## III.

The snows that glittered on the disc of Mars  
Have melted, and the planet's fiery orb  
Rolls in the crimson summer of its year ;  
But what to me the summer or the snow  
Of worlds that throb with life in forms unknown,  
If life indeed be theirs ; I heed not these.  
My heart is simply human ; all my care  
For them whose dust is fashioned like mine own ;  
These ache with cold and hunger, live in pain  
And shake with fear of worlds more full of woe ;  
There may be others worthier of my love,  
But such I know not save through these I know.

There are two veils of language, hid beneath  
Whose sheltering folds, we dare to be ourselves,  
And not that other self which nods and smiles  
And babbles in our name ; the one is Prayer,  
Lending its licensed freedom to the tongue  
That tells our sorrows and our sins to Heaven ;  
The other, Verse, that throws its spangled web  
Around our naked speech and makes it bold.  
I, whose best prayer is silence ; sitting dumb  
In the great temple where I nightly serve  
Him who is throned in light, have dared to claim  
The poet's franchise, though I may not hope  
To wear his garland ; hear me while I tell  
My story in such form as poets use,  
But breathed in fitful whispers, as the wind  
Sighs and then slumbers, wakes and sighs again.

Thou Vision, floating in the breathless air  
Between me and the fairest of the stars,  
I tell my lonely thoughts as unto thee.  
Look not for marvels of the scholar's pen  
In my rude measure ; I can only show  
A slender-margined, unillumined page,  
And trust its meaning to the flattering eye  
That reads it in the gracious light of love.  
Ah, wouldst thou clothe thyself in breathing shape  
And nestle at my side, my voice should lend  
Whate'er my verse may lack of tender rhythm  
To make thee listen.

I have stood entranced  
When, with her fingers wandering o'er the keys,  
The white enchantress with the golden hair  
Breathed all her soul through some unvalued rhyme ;  
Some flower of song that long has lost its bloom ;



Lo ! its dead summer kindled as she sang !  
 The sweet contralto, like the ring-dove's coo,  
 Thrilled it with brooding, fond, caressing tones,  
 And the pale minstrel's passion lived again,  
 Tearful and trembling as a dewy rose  
 The wind has shaken till it fills the air  
 With light and fragrance. Such the wondrous charm  
 A song can borrow when the bosom throbs  
 That lends it breath.

So from the poet's lips  
 His verse sounds doubly sweet, for none like him  
 Feels every cadence of its wave-like flow ;  
 He lives the passion over, while he reads,  
 That shook him as he sang his lofty strain,  
 And pours his life through each resounding line,  
 As ocean, when the stormy winds are hushed,  
 Still rolls and thunders through his billowy caves.

Let me retrace the record of the years  
 That made me what I am. A man most wise,  
 But overworn with toil and bent with age,  
 Sought me to be his scholar—me, run wild  
 From books and teachers—kindled in my soul  
 The love of knowledge ; led me to his tower,  
 Showed me the wonders of the midnight realm.  
 His hollow sceptre ruled, or seemed to rule,  
 Taught me the mighty secret of the spheres,  
 Trained me to find the glimmering specks of light  
 Beyond the unaided sense, and on my chart  
 To string them one by one, in order due,  
 As on a rosary a saint his beads.

I was his only scholar ; I became  
 The echo to his thought ; whate'er he knew  
 Was mine for asking ; so from year to year  
 We wrought together, till there came a time  
 When I, the learner, was the master half  
 Of the twinned being in the dome-crowned tower

Minds roll in paths like planets ; they revolve  
 This in a larger, that a narrower ring,  
 But round they come at last to that same phase,  
 That self-same light and shade they showed before.  
 I learned his annual and his monthly tale,  
 His weekly axiom and his daily phrase,  
 I felt them coming in the laden air,  
 And watched them labouring up to vocal breath,  
 Even as the first-born at his father's board  
 Knows ere he speaks the too familiar jest  
 Is on its way, by some mysterious sign  
 Forewarned, the click before the striking bell.

He shrivelled as I spread my growing leaves,  
 Till trust and reverence changed to pitying care ;  
 He lived for me in what he once had been,  
 But I for him, a shadow, a defence,

The guardian of his fame, his guide, his staff,  
Leaned on so long he fell if left alone.  
I was his eye, his ear, his cunning hand,  
Love was my spur and longing after fame,  
But his the goading thorn of sleepless age  
That sees its shortening span, its lengthening shades,  
That clutches what it may with eager grasp,  
And drops at last with empty, outstretched hands.

All this he dreamed not. He would sit him down  
Thinking to work his problems as of old ;  
And find the star he thought so plain a blur,  
The columned figure labyrinthine wilds  
Without my comments, blind and senseless scrawls  
That vexed him with their riddles ; he would strive  
And struggle for a while, and then his eye  
Would lose its light, and over all his mind  
The cold gray mist would settle ; and ere long  
The darkness fell, and I was left alone.

Alone ! no climber of an Alpine cliff,  
No Arctic venturer on the waveless sea,  
Feels the dread stillness round him as it chills  
The heart of him who leaves the slumbering earth  
To watch the silent worlds that crowd the sky.

Alone ! And as the shepherd leaves his flock  
To feed upon the hillside, he meanwhile  
Finds converse in the warblings of the pipe  
Himself has fashioned for his vacant hour,  
So have I grown companion to myself,  
And to the wandering spirits of the air  
That smile and whisper round us in our dreams.  
Thus have I learned to search if I may know  
The whence and why of all beneath the stars  
And all beyond them, and to weigh my life  
As in a balance—poising good and ill  
Against each other—asking of the Power  
That flung me forth among the whirling worlds,  
If I am heir to any inborn right,  
Or only as an atom of the dust  
That every wind may blow where'er it will.

I am not humble ; I was shown my place,  
Clad in such robes as Nature had at hand ;  
Took what she gave, not chose ; I know no shame,  
No fear for being simply what I am.  
I am not proud, I hold my every breath  
At Nature's mercy. I am as a babe  
Borne in a giant's arms, he knows not where ;  
Each several heart-beat, counted like the coin  
A miser reckons, is a special gift  
As from an unseen hand ; if that withhold  
Its bounty for a moment, I am left  
A clod upon the earth to which I fall.

Something I find in me that well might claim  
 The love of beings in a sphere above  
 This doubtful twilight world of right and wrong ;  
 Something that shows me of the self-same clay  
 That creeps or swims or flies in humblest form.  
 Had I been asked, before I left my bed  
 Of shapeless dust, what clothing I would wear,  
 I would have said, More angel and less worm ;  
 But for their sake who are even such as I,  
 Of the same mingled blood, I would not choose  
 To hate that meaner portion of myself  
 Which makes me brother to the least of men.

I dare not be a coward with my lips  
 Who dare to question all things in my soul ;  
 Some men may find their wisdom on their knees,  
 Some prone and grovelling in the dust like slaves ;  
 Let the meek glow-worm glisten in the dew ;  
 I ask to lift my taper to the sky  
 As they who hold their lamps above their heads,  
 Trusting the larger currents up aloft,  
 Rather than crossing eddies round their breast,  
 Threatening with every puff the flickering blaze.

My life shall be a challenge, not a truce !  
 This is my homage to the mightier powers,  
 To ask my boldest question, undismayed  
 By muttered threats that some hysteric sense  
 Of wrong or insult will convulse the throne  
 Where wisdom reigns supreme ; and if I err,  
 They all must err who have to feel their way  
 As bats that fly at noon ; for what are we  
 But creatures of the night, dragged forth by day,  
 Who needs must stumble, and with stammering steps  
 Spell out their paths in syllables of pain ?

Thou wilt not hold in scorn the child who dares  
 Look up to Thee, the Father—dares to ask  
 More than Thy wisdom answers. From thy hand  
 The worlds were cast : yet every leaflet claims  
 From that same hand its little shining sphere  
 Of star-lit dew ; thine image, the great sun,  
 Girt with his mantle of tempestuous flame,  
 Glares in mid-heaven ; but to his noontide blaze  
 The slender violet lifts its lidless eye,  
 And from his splendour steels its fairest hue,  
 Its sweetest perfume from his scorching fire.

I may just as well stop here as anywhere, for there is more of the manuscript to come, and I can only give it in instalments.

The Young Astronomer had told me I might read any portion of his manuscript I saw fit to certain friends. I tried this last extract on the Old Master.

‘It’s the same story we all have to tell,’ said he, when I had done reading. ‘We are all asking questions nowadays. I should like to hear him read some of his verses himself, and I think

some of the other boarders would like to. I wonder if he wouldn't do it, if we asked him ! Poets read their own compositions in a sing-song sort of way ; but they do seem to love 'em so, that I always enjoy it. It makes me laugh a little inwardly to see how they dandle their poetical babies, but I don't let them know it. We must get up a select party of the boarders to hear him read. We'll send him a regular invitation. I will put my name at the head of it, and you shall write it.'

That *was* neatly done. ~~How~~ I hate writing such things ! But I suppose I must do it.

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### VIII.

THE Master and I had been thinking for some time of trying to get the Young Astronomer round to our side of the table. There are many subjects on which both of us like to talk with him, and it would be convenient to have him nearer to us. How to manage it was not quite so clear as it might have been. The Scarabee wanted to sit with his back to the light, as it was in his present position. He used his eyes so much in studying minute objects, that he wished to spare them all fatigue, and did not like facing a window. Neither of us cared to ask the Man of Letters, so called, to change his place, and of course we could not think of making such a request of the Young Girl or the Lady. So we were at a stand with reference to this project of ours.

But while we were proposing, Fate or Providence disposed everything for us. The Man of Letters, so called, was missing one morning, having folded his tent—that is, packed his carpet-bag—with the silence of the Arabs, and encamped—that is, taken lodgings—in some locality which he had forgotten to indicate.

The Landlady bore this sudden bereavement remarkably well. Her remarks and reflections, though borrowing the aid of homely imagery and doing occasional violence to the nicer usages of speech, were not without philosophical discrimination.

'I like a gentleman that *is* a gentleman. But there's a difference in what folks call gentlemen as there is in what you put on table. There is cabbages and there is cauliflowers. There is clam and there is oysters. There is mackerel and there is salmon. And there is some that knows the difference and some that doesn't. I had a little account with that boarder that he forgot to settle before he went off, so all of a suddin. I sha'n't say anything about it. I've seen the time when I should have felt bad about losing what he owed me, but it was no great matter ; and if he'll only stay away now he's gone, I can stand

losing it, and not cry my eyes out nor lay awake all night neither. I never had ought to have took him. Where he come from and where he's gone to is unbeknown to me. If he'd only smoked *good* tobacco, I wouldn't have said a word ; but it was such dreadful stuff, it'll take a week to get his chamber sweet enough to show them that asks for rooms. It doos smell like all possest.'

'Left any goods?' asked the Salesman.

'Or dockermunts?' added the Member of the Haouse.

The Landlady answered with a faded smile, which implied that there was no hope in that direction. Dr. Benjamin, with a sudden recurrence of youthful feeling, made a fan with the fingers of his right hand, the second phalanx of the thumb resting on the tip of the nose, and the remaining digits diverging from each other, in the plane of the median line of the face—I suppose this is the way he would have described the gesture, which is almost a specialty of the Parisian *gamin*. That Boy immediately copied it, and added greatly to its effect by extending the fingers of the other hand in a line with those of the first, and vigorously agitating those of the two hands—a gesture which acts like a puncture on the distended self-esteem of one to whom it is addressed, and cheapens the memory of the absent to a very low figure.

I wish the reader to observe that I treasure up with interest all the words uttered by the Salesman. It must have been noticed that he very rarely speaks. Perhaps he has an inner life, with its own deep emotional, and lofty contemplative elements, but as we see him, he is the boarder reduced to the simplest expression of that term. Yet, like most human creatures, he has generic and specific characters not unworthy of being studied. I notice particularly a certain electrical briskness of movement, such as one may see in a squirrel, which clearly belongs to his calling. The drygoodsman's life behind his counter is a succession of sudden, snappy perceptions and brief series of co-ordinated spasms, as thus :—

'Purple calico, three quarters wide, six yards.'

Up goes the arm ; bang ! tumbles out the flat roll and turns half a dozen somersets, as if for the fun of the thing ; the six yards of calico hurry over the measuring nails, hunching their backs up, like six cankerworms ; out jump the scissors ; snip, clip, rip ; the stuff is whisped up, brown-papered, tied, labelled, delivered and the man is himself again, like a child just come out of a convulsion-fit. Think of a man's having some hundreds of these semi-epileptic seizures every day, and you need not wonder that he does not say much ; these fits take the talk all out of him.

But because he, or any other man, does not say much, it does not follow that he may not have, as I have said, an exalted and intense inner life. I have known a number of cases where

a man who seemed thoroughly common-place and unemotional has all at once surprised everybody by telling the story of his hidden life far more pointedly and dramatically than any playwright or novelist or poet could have told it for him. I will not insult your intelligence, Beloved, by saying *how* he has told it.

We had been talking over the subjects touched upon in the Lady's letter.

'I suppose one man in a dozen,' said the Master, 'ought to be born a sceptic. That was the proportion among the Apostles, at any rate.'

'So there was one Judas among them,' I remarked.

'Well,' said the Master, 'they've been whitewashing Judas of late. But never mind him. I did not say there was not one rogue on the average among a dozen men. I don't see how that would interfere with my proposition. If I say that among a dozen you ought to find one that weighs over a hundred and fifty pounds, and you tell me that there were twelve men in your club, and one of 'em had red hair, I don't see that you have materially damaged my statement.'

I thought it best to let the Old Master have his easy victory, which was more apparent than real, very evidently, and he went on.

'When the Lord sends out a batch of human beings, say a hundred—Did you ever read my book, the new edition of it, I mean?'

It is rather awkward to answer such a question in the negative, but I said, with the best grace I could, "No, not *the last edition*."

'Well, I must give you a copy of it. My book and I are pretty much the same thing. Sometimes I steal from my book in my talk without mentioning it, and then I say to myself, "Oh, that won't do; everybody has read my book and knows it by heart." And then the other *I* says—you know there are two of us, right and left, like a pair of shoes,—the other *I* says, "You're a—something or other—fool. They haven't read your confounded old book; besides, if they have, they have forgotten all about it." Another time I say, thinking I will be very honest, "I have said something about that in my book;" and then the other *I* says, "What a Balaam's quadruped you are to tell 'em it's in your book; they don't care whether it is or not, if it's anything worth saying; and if it isn't worth saying, what are you braying for?" That is a rather sensible fellow, that other chap we talk with, but an impudent whelp. I never got such abuse from any blackguard in my life as I have from that No. 2 of me, the one that answers the other's questions and makes the comments, and does what in demotic phrase is called the "sarsing."

I laughed at that. 'I have just such a fellow always with me, as wise as Solomon, if I would only heed him ; but as insolent as Shimei, cursing, and throwing stones and dirt, and behaving as if he had the traditions of the "ape-like human being" born with him rather than civilized instincts. One does not have to be a king to know what it is to keep a king's jester.'

'I mentioned my book,' the Master said, 'because I have something in it on the subject we were talking about. I should like to read you a passage here and there out of it, where I have expressed myself a little more freely on some of those matters we handle in conversation. If you don't quarrel with it, I must give you a copy of the book. It's a rather serious thing to get a copy of a book from the writer of it. It has made my adjectives sweat pretty hard, I know, to put together an answer returning thanks and not lying beyond the twilight of veracity, if one may use a figure. Let me try a little of my book on you, in divided doses, as my friends the doctors say.'

'*Fiat experimentum in corpore vili*,' I said, laughing at my own expense. 'I don't doubt the medicament is quite as good as the patient deserves, and probably a great deal better,' I added, reinforcing my feeble compliment.

(When you pay a compliment to an author, don't qualify it in the next sentence so as to take all the goodness out of it. Now I am thinking of it, I will give you one or two pieces of advice. Be careful to assure yourself that the person you are talking with wrote the article or book you praise. It is not very pleasant to be told, 'Well, there, now ! I always liked your writings, but you never did anything half so good as this last piece,' and then to have to tell the blunderer that this last piece isn't yours, but t'other man's. Take care that the phrase or sentence you commend is not one that is in quotation-marks. 'The best thing in your piece, I think, is a line I do not remember meeting before ; it struck me as very true and well expressed :

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

'But, my dear lady, that line is one which is to be found in a writer of the last century, and not original with me.' One ought not to have undeceived her, perhaps, but one is naturally honest, and cannot bear to be credited with what is not his own. The lady blushes, of course, and says she has not read much ancient literature, or some such thing. The pearl upon the Ethiop's arm is very pretty in verse, but one does not care to furnish the dark background for other person's jewelry.)

I adjourned from the table in company with the Old Master to his apartments. He was evidently in easy circumstances, for he had the best accommodations the house afforded. We passed through a reception-room to his library, where everything



showed that he had ample means for indulging the modest tastes of a scholar.

The first thing, naturally, when one enters a scholar's study or library, is to look at his books. One gets a notion very speedily of his tastes and the range of his pursuits by a glance round his book-shelves.

Of course, you know there are many fine houses where the library is a part of the upholstery, so to speak. Books in handsome binding kept locked under plate-glass in showy dwarf book-cases are as important to stylish establishments as servants in livery, who sit with folded arms, are to stylish equipages. I suppose those wonderful statues with the folded arms do sometimes change their attitude, and I suppose those books with the gilded backs do sometimes get opened, but it is nobody's business whether they do or not, and it is not best to ask too many questions.

This sort of thing is common enough, but there is another case that may prove deceptive if you undertake to judge from appearances. Once in a while you will come on a house where you will find a family of readers and almost no library. Some of the most indefatigable devourers of literature have very few books. They belong to book clubs, they haunt the public libraries, they borrow of friends, and somehow or other get hold of everything they want, scoop out all it holds for them, and have done with it. When I want a book, it is as a tiger wants a sheep. I must have it with one spring, and, if I miss it, go away defeated and hungry. And my experience with public libraries is that the first volume of the book I inquire for is out, unless I happen to want the second, when *that* is out.

I was pretty well prepared to understand the Master's library and his account of it. We seated ourselves in two very comfortable chairs, and I began the conversation.

'I see you have a large and rather miscellaneous collection of books. Did you get them together by accident or according to some preconceived plan?'

'Both, sir, both,' the Master answered. 'When Providence throws a good book in my way, I bow to its decree and purchase it as an act of piety, if it is reasonably or unreasonably cheap. I *adopt* a certain number of books every year, out of a love for the foundlings and stray children of other people's brains that nobody seems to care for. Look here.'

He took down a Greek Lexicon finely bound in calf, and spread it open.

'Do you see that Hedericus? I had Greek dictionaries enough and to spare, but I saw that noble quarto lying in the midst of an ignoble crowd of cheap books, and marked with a price which I felt to be an insult to scholarship, to the memory of Homer, sir, and the awful shade of Æschylus. I paid the mean price asked for it, and I wanted to double it, but I suppose it would

have been a foolish sacrifice of coin to sentiment. I love that book for its looks and behaviour. None of your 'half-calf' economies in that volume, sir ! And see how it lies open anywhere ! There isn't a book in my library that has such a generous way of laying its treasures before you. From Alpha to Omega, calm, assured rest at any page that your choice or accident may light on. No lifting of a rebellious leaf like an upstart servant that does not know his place and can never be taught manners, but tranquil, well-bred repose. A book may be a perfect gentleman in its aspect and demeanour, and this book would be good company for personages like Roger Ascham and his pupils the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Jane Grey.'

The Master was evidently riding a hobby, and what I wanted to know was the plan on which he had formed his library. So I brought him back to the point by asking him the question in so many words.

'Yes,' he said, 'I have a kind of notion of the way in which a library ought to be put together—no, I don't mean that, I mean ought to grow. I don't pretend to say that mine is a model, but it serves my turn well enough, and it represents me pretty accurately. A scholar must shape his own shell, *secrete* it, one might almost say, for secretion is only separation, you know, of certain elements derived from the materials of the world about us. And a scholar's study, with the books lining its walls, is his shell. It isn't a mollusk's shell, either ; it's a caddice-worm's shell. You know about the caddice-worm ?'

'More or less ; less rather than more,' was my humble reply.

'Well, sir, the caddice-worm is the larva of a fly, and he makes a case for himself out of all sorts of bits of everything that happen to suit his particular fancy, dead or alive, sticks and stones and small shells with their owners in 'em, living as comfortable as ever. Every one of these caddice-worms has his special fancy as to what he will pick up and glue together, with a kind of natural cement he provides himself, to make his case out of. In it he lives, sticking his head and shoulders out once in a while, that is all. Don't you see that a student in his library is a caddice-worm in his case ? I've told you that I take an interest in pretty much everything, and don't mean to fence out any human interests from the private grounds of my intelligence. Then, again, there is a subject, perhaps I may say there is more than one, that I want to exhaust, to know to the very bottom. And besides, of course I must have my literary *harem*, my *parc aux cerfs*, where my favourites await my moments of leisure and pleasure—my scarce and precious editions, my luxurious typographical masterpieces ; my Delilahs, that take my head in their lap : the pleasant story-tellers and the like ; the books I love because they are fair to look upon, prized by collectors, endeared by old associations, secret treasures that nobody else knows any-

thing about ; books, in short, that I like for insufficient reasons it may be, but peremptorily, and mean to like and to love and to cherish till death us do part.

‘ Don’t you see I have given you a key to the way my library is made up, so that you can *apriorize* the plan according to which I have filled my bookcases ? I will tell you how it is carried out.

‘ In the first place you see, I have four extensive cyclopædias. Out of these I can get information enough to serve my immediate purpose on almost any subject. These, of course, are supplemented by geographical, biographical, bibliographical, and other dictionaries, including of course lexicons to all the languages I ever meddle with. Next to these come the works relating to my one or two specialties, and these collections I make as perfect as I can. Every library should try to be complete on something, if it were only on the history of pin-heads. I don’t mean that I buy all the trashy compilations on my special subjects, but I try to have all the works of any real importance relating to them, old as well as new. In the following compartment you will find the great authors in all the languages I have mastered, from Homer and Hesiod downward to the last great English name. This division, you see, you can make almost as extensive or as limited as you choose. You can crowd the great representative writers into a small compass ; or you can make a library consisting only of the different editions of Horace, if you have space and money enough. Then comes the *Harem*, the shelf or the bookcase of Delilahs, that you have paid wicked prices for, that you love without pretending to be reasonable about it, and would bag in case of fire before all the rest, just as Mr. Townley took the Clytie to his carriage when the anti-Catholic mob threatened his house in 1780. As for the foundlings like my Hedericus, they go among their peers ; it is a pleasure to take them from the dusty stall where they were elbowed by plebeian school-books and battered odd volumes, and give them Alduses and Elzevirs for companions.

‘ Nothing remains but the Infirmary. The most painful subjects are the unfortunates that have lost a cover. Bound a hundred years ago, perhaps, and one of the rich old browned covers gone—what a pity ! Do you know what to do about it ? I’ll tell you—no, I’ll *show* you. Look at this volume, *M. T. Ciceronis Opera*—a dozen of ’em—one of ’em minus half his cover, a poor one-legged cripple, six months ago—now see him.’

*He* looked very respectable indeed, both covers dark, ancient, very decently matched ; one would hardly notice the fact that they were not twins.

‘ I’ll tell you what I did. You poor devil, said I, you are a disgrace to your family. We must send you to a surgeon, and have some kind of a Taliacotian operation performed on you. (You remember the operation as described in *Hudibras*, of

course.) The first thing was to find a subject of similar age and aspect ready to part with one of his members. So I went to Quidlibet's—you know Quidlibet and that hieroglyphic sign of his, with the omniscient-looking eye as its most prominent feature—and laid my case before him. I want you, said I, to look up an old book of mighty little value—one of your ten-cent vagabonds would be the sort of thing—but an *old* beggar, with a cover like this, and lay it by for me.

'And Quidlibet, who is a pleasant body to deal with—only he has insulted one or two gentlemanly books by selling them to me at very low-bred and shamefully insufficient prices—Quidlibet, I say, laid by three old books for me to help myself from, and didn't take the trouble even to make me pay the thirty cents for 'em. Well, said I to myself, let us look at our three books that have undergone the last insult short of the trunk-maker's or the paper-mills, and see what they are. There may be something worth looking at in one or the other of 'em.

'Now, do you know it was with a kind of tremor that I untied the package and looked at these three unfortunates, too humble for the companionable dime to recognise as its equal in value. The same sort of feeling, you know, if you ever tried the Bible and key, or the *Sortes Virgilianæ*. I think you will like to know what the three books were which had been bestowed upon me *gratis*, that I might tear away one of the covers of the one that best matched my Cicero, and give it to the binder to cobble my crippled volume with.'

The Master took the three books from a cupboard and continued :

'No. I. An odd volume of "The Adventurer." It has many interesting things enough, but is made precious by containing Simon Browne's famous Dedication to the Queen of his answer to Tindal's "Christianity as old as the Creation." Simon Browne was the *Man without a Soul*. An excellent person, a most worthy dissenting minister, but lying under a strange delusion.

'Here is a paragraph from his Dedication :

"He was once a man ; and of some little name ; but of no worth, as his present unparalleled case makes but too manifest ; for by the immediate hand of an avenging GOD, his very thinking substance has, for more than seven years, been continually wasting away, till it is wholly perished out of him, if it be not utterly come to nothing. None, no, not the least remembrance of its very ruins, remains, not the shadow of an idea is left, nor any sense that, so much as one single one, perfect or imperfect, whole or diminished, ever did appear to a mind within him, or was perceived by it."

'Think of this as the Dedication of a book "universally allowed to be the best which that controversy produced," and what a flood of light it pours on the insanities of those self-

analyzing diarists whose morbid reveries have been so often mistaken for piety ! No. I. had something for me, then, besides the cover, which was all it claimed to have worth offering.

'No. II. was "A View of Society and Manners in Italy." Vol. III. By John Moore, M.D. (*Zeluco* Moore.) You know his pleasant book. In this particular volume what interested me most, perhaps, was the very spirited and intelligent account of the miracle of the liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius, but it gave me an hour's mighty agreeable reading. So much for Number Two.

'No. III. was "An ESSAY on the Great EFFECTS of Even *Languid* and *Unheeded* LOCAL MOTION." By the Hon. Robert Boyle. Published in 1685, and, as appears from other sources, "received with great and general applause." I confess I was a little startled to find how near this earlier philosopher had come to the modern doctrines, such as are illustrated in Tyndall's "Heat considered as a Mode of Motion." He speaks of "Us, who endeavour to resolve the *Phenomena* of Nature into Matter and Local motion." That sounds like the nineteenth century, but what shall we say to this ? "As when a bar of iron or silver, having been well hammered, is newly taken off of the anvil ; though the eye can discern no motion in it, yet the touch will readily perceive it to be very hot, and if you spit upon it, the brisk agitation of the insensible parts will become visible in that which they will produce in the liquor." He takes a bar of tin, and tries whether, by bending it to and fro two or three times he cannot "procure a considerable internal commotion among the parts ;" and having by this means broken or cracked it in the middle, finds, as he expected, that the middle parts had considerably heated each other. There are many other curious and interesting observations in the volume which I should like to tell you of, but these will serve my purpose.'

'Which book furnished you the old cover you wanted?' said I.

'*Did he kill the owl?*' said the Master, laughing (I suppose you, the reader, know the owl story). 'It was Number Two that lent me one of his covers. Poor wretch ! He was one of three, and had lost his two brothers. From him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath. The Scripture had to be fulfilled in his case. But I couldn't help saying to myself, What do you keep writing books for, when the stalls are covered all over with 'em, good books, too, that nobody will give ten cents apiece for, lying there like so many dead beasts of burden, of no account except to strip off their hides ? What is the use, I say ? I have made a book or two in my time, and I am making another that perhaps will see the light one of these days. But if I had my life to live over again, I think I should go in for silence, and get as near *Nirvana* as I could. This language is such a paltry tool !

The handle of it cuts and the blade doesn't. You muddle yourself by not knowing what you mean by a word, and send out your unanswered riddles and rebuses to clear up other people's difficulties. It always seems to me that talk is a ripple and thought is a ground swell. A string of words that mean pretty much anything, helps you in a certain sense to get hold of a thought, just as a string of syllables that mean nothing helps you to a word; but it's a poor business, it's a poor business, and the more you study *definition* the more you find out how poor it is. Do you know, I sometimes think our little entomological neighbour is doing a sounder business than we people that make books about ourselves and our slippery abstractions? A man can see the spots on a bug and count 'em, and tell what their colour is, and put another bug alongside of him and see whether the two are alike or different. And when *he* uses a word he knows just what he means. There is no mistake as to the meaning and identity of *pulex irritans*, confound him.'

'What if we should look in, some day, on the Scarabeeist, as he calls himself?' said I. The fact is the Master had got a-going at such a rate that I was willing to give a little turn to the conversation.

'Oh, very well,' said the Master. 'I had some more things to say, but I don't doubt they'll keep. And besides, I take an interest in entomology, and have my own opinion on the *meloe* question.'

'You don't mean to say you have studied insects as well as solar systems and the order of things generally?'

He looked pleased. All philosophers look pleased when people say to them virtually, 'Ye are gods.' The Master says he is vain constitutionally, and thanks God that he is. I don't think he has enough vanity to make a fool of himself with it, but the simple truth is he cannot help knowing that he has a wide and lively intelligence, and it pleases him to know it, and to be reminded of it, especially in an oblique and tangential sort of way, so as not to look like downright flattery.

'Yes, yes, I have amused a summer or two with insects, among other things. I described a new *tabanus*—horsefly, you know—which, I think, had escaped notice. I felt as grand when I showed up my new discovery as if I had created the beast. I don't doubt Herschel felt as if he had made a planet when he first showed the astronomers *Georgium Sidus*, as he called it. And that reminds me of something. I was riding on the outside of a stage-coach from London to Windsor in the year—never mind the year, but it must have been in June, I suppose, for I bought some strawberries. England owes me a sixpence with interest from date, for I gave the woman a shilling, and the coach contrived to start or the woman timed it so that

I just missed getting my change. What an odd thing memory is, to be sure, to have kept such a triviality, and have lost so much that was invaluable! She is a crazy wench, that Mnemosyne; she throws her jewels out of the window and locks up straws and old rags in her strong box.'

(' *De profundis!*' said I to myself; 'the bottom of the bushel has dropped out! *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!*')

'But as I was saying, I was riding on the outside of a stage-coach from London to Windsor, when all at once a picture familiar to me from my New England village childhood came upon me like a reminiscence rather than a revelation. It was a mighty bewilderment of slanted masts and spars and ladders and ropes, from the midst of which a vast tube, looking as if it might be a piece of ordnance such as the revolted angels battered the walls of Heaven with, according to Milton, lifted its muzzle defiantly towards the sky. "Why, you blessed old rattle-trap," said I to myself, "I know you as well as I know my father's spectacles and snuff-box!" And that same crazy witch of a Memory, so divinely wise and foolish, travels thirty-five hundred miles or so in a single pulse-beat, makes straight for an old house and an old library and an old corner of it, and whisks out a volume of an old cyclopædia, and there is the picture of which this is the original. Sir William Herschel's great telescope! It was just about as big, as it stood there by the roadside, as it was in the picture, not much different any way. Why should it be? The pupil of your eye is only a gimlet-hole, not so very much bigger than the eye of a sail-needle, and a camel has to go through it before you can see him. You look into a stereoscope and think you see a miniature of a building or a mountain; you don't; you're made a fool of by your lying *intelligence*, as you call it; you see the building and the mountain just as large as with your naked eye looking straight at the real objects. Doubt it, do you? Perhaps you'd like to doubt it to the music of a couple of gold five-dollar pieces. If you would, say the word, and money and man, as Messrs. Heenan and Morrissey have it, shall be forthcoming; for I will make you look at a real landscape with your right eye, and a stereoscopic view of it with your left eye, both at once, and you can slide one over the other by a little management and see how exactly the picture overlies the true landscape. We won't try it now, because I want to read you something out of my book.'

'I have noticed that the Master very rarely fails to come back to his original proposition, though he, like myself, is fond of zigzagging in order to reach it. Men's minds are like the pieces on a chess-board in their way of moving. One mind creeps from the square it is on to the next, straight forward, like the pawns. Another sticks close to its own line of thought, and follows it as far as it goes, with no heed for others' opinions, as



the bishop sweeps the board in the line of his own colour. And another class of minds break through everything that lies before them, ride over argument and opposition, and go to the end of the board like the castle. But there is still another sort of intellect which is very apt to jump over the thought that lies next and come down in the unexpected way of the knight. But that same knight, as the chess manuals will show you, will contrive to get on to every square of the board in a pretty series of moves that looks like a pattern of embroidery, and so these zig-zagging minds like the Master's—and I suppose my own is something like it—will sooner or later get back to the square next the one they started from.

The Master took down a volume from one of the shelves. I could not help noticing that it was a shelf near his hand as he sat, and that the volume looked as if he had made frequent use of it. I saw, too, that he handled it in a loving sort of way; the tenderness he would have bestowed on a wife and children had to find a channel somewhere, and what more natural than that he should look fondly on the volume which held the thoughts that had rolled themselves smooth and round in his mind like pebbles on a beach, the dreams which, under cover of the simple artifices such as all writers use, told the little world of readers his secret hopes and aspirations, the fancies which had pleased him, and which he could not bear to let die without trying to please others with them? I have a great sympathy with authors, most of all with unsuccessful ones. If one had a dozen lives or so, it would all be very well, but to have but a single ticket in the great lottery, and have that drawn a blank, is a rather sad sort of thing. So I was pleased to see the affectionate kind of pride with which the Master handled his book; it was a success, in its way, and he looked on it with a cheerful sense that he had a right to be proud of it. The Master opened the volume, and putting on his large round glasses, began reading, as authors love to read that love their books.

'The only good reason for believing in the stability of the moral order of things is to be found in the tolerable steadiness of human averages. Out of a hundred human beings fifty-one will be found in the long run on the side of the right, so far as they know it, and against the wrong. They will be organizers rather than dis-organizers, helpers and not hinderers in the upward movement of the race. This is the main fact we have to depend on. The right hand of the great organism is a little stronger than the left, that is all.

'Now and then we come across a left-handed man. So now and then we find a tribe or a generation, the subject of what we may call moral left-handedness, but that need not trouble us about our formula. All we have to do is to spread the average

over a wider territory or a longer period of time. Any race or period that insists on being left-handed must go under if it comes in contact with a right-handed one. If there were, as a general rule, fifty-one rogues in the hundred instead of forty-nine, all other qualities of mind and body being equally distributed between the two sections, the order of things would sooner or later end in universal disorder. It is the question between the leak and the pumps.

‘It does not seem very likely that the Creator of all things is taken by surprise at witnessing anything any of his creatures do or think. Men have sought out many inventions, but they can have contrived nothing which did not exist as an idea in the omniscient consciousness to which past, present, and future are alike Now.

‘We read what travellers tell us about the King of Dahomey, or the Fejee Island people, or the short and simple annals of the celebrities recorded in the Newgate Calendar, and do not know just what to make of these brothers and sisters of the race; but I do not suppose an intelligence even as high as the angelic beings, to stop short there, would see anything very peculiar or wonderful about them, except as everything is wonderful and unlike everything else.

‘It is very curious to see how science, that is, looking at and arranging the facts of a case with our own eyes and our own intelligence, without minding what somebody else has said, or how some old majority vote, went in a pack of intriguing ecclesiastics—I say it is very curious to see how science is catching up with one superstition after another.

‘There is a recognized branch of science familiar to all those who know anything of the studies relating to life, under the name of Teratology. It deals with all sorts of monstrosities which are to be met with in living beings, and more especially in animals. It is found that what used to be called *lusus naturæ*, or freaks of nature, are just as much subject to laws as the naturally developed forms of living creatures.

‘The rustic looks at the Siamese twins, and thinks he is contemplating an unheard-of anomaly; but there are plenty of cases like theirs in the books of scholars, and though they are not quite so common as double cherries, the mechanism of their formation is not a whit more mysterious than that of the twinned fruit. Such cases do not disturb the average arrangement; we have Changs and Engs at one pole, and Cains and Abels at the other. One child is born with six fingers on each hand, and another falls short by one or more fingers of his due allowance; but the glover puts his faith in the great law of averages, and makes his gloves with five fingers apiece, trusting nature for their counterparts.

‘Thinking people are not going to be scared out of explaining

or at least trying to explain things by the shrieks of persons whose beliefs are disturbed thereby. Comets were portents to Increase Mather, President of Harvard College; "preachers of Divine wrath, heralds and messengers of evil tidings to the world." It is not so very long since Professor Winthrop was teaching at the same institution. I can remember two of his boys very well, old boys, it is true, they were, and one of them wore a three-cornered cocked hat; but the father of these boys, whom, as I say, I can remember, had to defend himself against the minister of the Old South Church for the impiety of trying to account for earthquakes on natural principles. And his ancestor, Governor Winthrop, would probably have shaken his head over his descendant's dangerous audacity, if one may judge by the solemn way in which he mentions poor Mrs. Hutchinson's unpleasant experience, which so grievously disappointed her maternal expectations. But people used always to be terribly frightened by those irregular vital products which we now call "interesting specimens" and carefully preserve in jars of alcohol. It took next to nothing to make a panic; a child was born a few centuries ago with six teeth in its head, and about that time the Turks began gaining great advantages over the Christians. Of course there was an intimate connection between the prodigy and the calamity. So said the wise men of that day.

"All these out-of-the-way cases are studied connectedly now, and are found to obey very exact rules. With a little management one can even manufacture living monstrosities. Malformed salmon and other fish can be supplied in quantity, if anybody happens to want them.

"Now, what all I have said is tending to is exactly this, namely, that just as the celestial movements are regulated by fixed laws, just as bodily monstrosities are produced according to rule, and with as good reason as normal shapes, so obliquities of character are to be accounted for on perfectly natural principles; they are just as capable of classification as the bodily ones, and they all diverge from a certain average or middle term which is the type of its kind.

"If life had been a little longer I would have written a number of essays for which, as it is, I cannot expect to have time. I have set down the titles of a hundred or more, and I have often been tempted to publish those, for, according to my idea, the title of a book very often renders the rest of it unnecessary. "Moral Teratology," for instance, which is marked No. 67 on my list of "Essays Potential, not Actual," suggests sufficiently well what I should be like to say in the pages it would preface. People hold up their hands at a moral monster as if there was no reason for his existence but his own choice. That was a fine specimen we read of in the papers a few years ago—the Frenchman, it may be remembered, who used to waylay and murder young women,

and after appropriating their effects, bury their bodies in a private cemetery he kept for that purpose. It is very natural, and I do not say it is not very proper, to hang such eccentric persons as this ; but it is not clear whether his vagaries produce any more sensation at Head-quarters than the meek enterprises of the mildest of city missionaries. For the study of Moral Teratology will teach you that you do not get such a malformed character as that without a long chain of causes to account for it ; and if you only knew those causes, you would know perfectly well what to expect. You may feel pretty sure that our friend of the private cemetery was not the child of pious and intelligent parents ; that he was not nurtured by the best of mothers, and educated by the most judicious teachers ; and that he did not come of a lineage long known and honoured for its intellectual and moral qualities. Suppose that one should go to the worst quarter of the city and pick out the worst-looking child of the worst couple he could find, and then train him up successively at the School for Infant Rogues, the Academy for Young Scamps, and the College for Complete Criminal Education, would it be reasonable to expect a François Xavier or a Henry Martyn to be the result of such a training ? The traditionists, in whose presumptuous hands the science of anthropology has been trusted from time immemorial, have insisted on eliminating cause and effect from the domain of morals. When they have come across a moral monster they have seemed to think that he put himself together, having a free choice of all the constituents which make up manhood, and that consequently no punishment could be too bad for him.

‘I say, Hang him and welcome, if that is the best thing for society ; hate him, in a certain sense, as you hate a rattle-snake, but, if you pretend to be a philosopher, recognize the fact that what you hate in him is chiefly misfortune, and that if you had been born with his villainous low forehead and poisoned instincts, and bred among creatures of the *Races Maudites* whose natural history has to be studied like that of beasts of prey and vermin, you would not have been sitting there in your gold-bowed spectacles and passing judgment on the peccadilloes of your fellow-creatures.

‘I have seen men and women so disinterested and noble, and devoted to the best works, that it appeared to me if any good and faithful servant was entitled to enter into the joys of his Lord, such as these might be. But I do not know that I ever met with a human being who seemed to me to have a stronger claim on the pitying consideration and kindness of his Maker than a wretched, puny, crippled, stunted child that I saw in Newgate, who was pointed out as one of the most notorious and inveterate little thieves in London. I have no doubt that some of those who were looking at this pitiable morbid secretion of the

diseased social organism thought they were very virtuous for hating him so heartily.

‘It is natural, and in one sense is all right enough. I want to catch a thief and put the extinguisher on an incendiary as much as my neighbours do ; but I have two sides to my consciousness as I have two sides to my heart, one carrying dark, impure blood, and the other the bright stream which has been purified and vivified by the great source of life and death—the oxygen of the air which gives all things their vital heat, and burns all things at last to ashes.

‘One side of me loves and hates ; the other side of me judges, say rather pleads and suspends judgment. I think, if I were left to myself, I should hang a rogue and then write his apology and subscribe to a neat monument, commemorating, not his virtues, but his misfortunes. I should, perhaps, adorn the marble with emblems, as is the custom with regard to the more regular and normally constituted members of society. It would not be proper to put the image of a lamb upon the stone which marked the resting-place of him of the private cemetery. But I would not hesitate to place the effigy of a wolf or a hyena upon the monument. I do not judge these animals, I only kill them or shut them up. I presume they stand just as well with their Maker as lambs and kids, and the existence of such beings is a perpetual plea for God Almighty’s poor, yelling scalping Indians, his weasand-stopping Thugs, his despised felons, his murdering miscreants, and all the unfortunates whom we, picked individuals of a picked class of a picked race, scrubbed, combed, and catechized from our cradles upward, undertake to find accommodations for in another state of being where it is to be hoped they will have a better chance than they had in this.’

The Master paused, and took off his great round spectacles. I could not help thinking that he looked benevolent enough to pardon Judas Iscariot just at that moment, though his features can knot themselves up pretty formidably on occasion.

‘You are somewhat of a phrenologist, I judge, by the way you talk of instinctive and inherited tendencies,’ I said.

‘They tell me I ought to be,’ he answered, parrying my question, as I thought. ‘I have had a famous chart made out of my cerebral organs, according to which I ought to have been—something more than a poor *Magister Artium*.’

I thought a shade of regret deepened the lines on his broad, antique-looking forehead, and I began talking about all the sights I had seen in the way of monstrosities, of which I had a considerable list, as you will see when I tell you my weakness in that direction. This, you understand, Beloved, is private and confidential.

I pay my quarter of a dollar and go into all the side-shows

that follow the caravans and circuses round the country. I have made friends of all the giants and all the dwarfs. I became acquainted with Monsieur Bihin, *le plus bel homme du monde*, and one of the biggest, a great many years ago, and have kept up my agreeable relations with him ever since. He is a most interesting giant, with a softness of voice and tenderness of feeling which I find very engaging. I was on friendly terms with Mr. Charles Freeman, a very superior giant of American birth, seven feet four, I think, in height, 'double jointed,' of mylodon muscularity, the same who in a British prize-ring tossed the Tipton Slasher from one side of the rope to the other, and now lies stretched, poor fellow ! in a mighty grave in the same soil which holds the sacred ashes of Cribb, and the honoured dust of Burke—not the one 'commonly called the sublime,' but that other Burke to whom Nature had denied the sense of hearing lest he should be spoiled by listening to the praises of the admiring circles which looked on his dear-bought triumphs. Nor have I despised those little ones whom that devout worshipper of Nature in her exceptional forms, the distinguished Barnum, has introduced to the notice of mankind. The General touches his chapeau to me, and the Commodore gives me a sailor's greeting. I have had confidential interviews with the double-headed daughter of Africa—so far, at least, as her two-fold personality admitted of private confidences. I have listened to the touching experiences of the Bearded Lady, whose rough cheeks belie her susceptible heart. Miss Jane Campbell has allowed me to question her on the delicate subject of avoirdupois equivalents ; and the armless fair one, whose embrace no monarch could hope to win, has wrought me a watch-paper with those despised digits which have been degraded from gloves to boots in our evolution from the condition of quadrumana.

I hope you have read my experiences as good-naturedly as the Old Master listened to them. He seemed to be pleased with my whim, and promised to go with me to see all the side-shows of the next caravan. Before I left him he wrote my name in a copy of the new edition of his book, telling me that it would not all be new to me by a great deal, for he often talked what he had printed to make up for having printed a good deal of what he had talked.

Here is the passage of his Poem the Young Astronomer read to us.

#### WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR DRIFTS.

##### IV.

From my lone turret as I look around  
O'er the green meadows to the ring of blue,  
From slope, from summit, and from half-hid vale  
The sky is stabbed with dagger-pointed spires,

The gilded symbols whirling in the wind,  
 Their brazen tongues proclaiming to the world,  
 'Here truth is sold, the only genuine ware;  
 See that it has our trade-mark! You will buy  
 Poison instead of food across the way,  
 The lies of'——this or that, each several name.  
 The standard's blazon and the battle-cry  
 Of some true-gospel faction, and again  
 The token of the Beast to all beside.  
 And grouped round each I see a huddling crowd  
 Alike in all things save the words they use;  
 In love, in longing, hate and fear the same.

Whom do we trust and serve? We speak of ours  
 And bow to many; Athens still would find  
 The shrines of all she worshipped safe within.  
 Our tall barbarian temples, and the thrones  
 That crowned Olympus mighty as of old,  
 The god of music rules the sabbath choir;  
 The lyric muse must leave the sacred nine  
 To help us please the *dilettante's* ear;  
 Plutus limps homeward with us, as we leave  
 The portals of the temple where we knelt  
 And listened while the god of eloquence  
 (Hermes of ancient days, but now disguised  
 In sable vestments) with that other god  
 Somnus, the son of Erebus and Nox,  
 Fights in unequal contest for our souls;  
 The dreadful sovereign of the under world  
 Still shakes his sceptre at us, and we hear  
 The baying of the triple-throated hound;  
 Eros is young as ever, and as fair  
 The lovely Goddess born of ocean's foam.

These by thy gods, O Israel! Who is he,  
 The one ye name and tell us that ye serve,  
 Whom ye would call me from my lonely tower  
 To worship with the many-headed throng?  
 Is it the God that walked in Eden's grove  
 In the cool hour to seek our guilty sire?  
 The God who dealt with Abraham as the sons  
 Of that old patriarch deal with other men?  
 The jealous God of Moses, one who feels  
 An image as an insult, and is wroth  
 With him who made it and his child unborn?  
 The God who plagued his people for the sin  
 Of their adulterous king, beloved of him—  
 The same who offers to a chosen few  
 The right to praise him in eternal song  
 While a vast shrieking world of endless woe  
 Blends its dread chorus with their rapturous hymn  
 Is this the God ye mean, or is it he  
 Who heeds the sparrow's fall, whose loving heart  
 Is as the pitying father's to his child,  
 Whose lesson to his children is 'Forgive,'  
 Whose plea for all, 'They know not what they do'?



I claim the right of knowing whom I serve,  
 Else is my service idle ; He that asks  
 My homage asks it from a reasoning soul.  
 To crawl is not to worship ; we have learned  
 A drill of eyelids, bended neck and knee,  
 Hanging our prayers on hinges, till we ape  
 The flexures of the many joined worm.  
 Asia has taught her Allahs and salaams  
 To the world's children—we have grown to men !  
 We who have rolled the sphere beneath our feet  
 To find a virgin forest, as we lay  
 The beams of our rude temple, first of all  
 Must frame its doorway high enough for man  
 To pass unstooping ; knowing as we do  
 That he who shaped us last of living forms  
 Has long enough been served by creeping things,  
 Reptiles that left their foot-prints in the sand  
 Of old sea-margins that have turned to stone,  
 And men who learned their ritual ; we demand  
 To know him first, then trust him and then love  
 When we have found him worthy of our love,  
 Tried by our own poor hearts and not before ;  
 He must be truer than the truest friend,  
 He must be tenderer than a woman's love,  
 A father better than the best of sires ;  
 Kinder than she who bore us, though we sin  
 Oftener than did the brother we are told  
 We—poor ill-tempered mortals—must forgive  
 Though seven times sinning threescore times and ten.

This is the new world's gospel : Be ye men !  
 Try well the legends of the children's time ;  
 Ye are the chosen people, God has led  
 Your steps across the desert of the deep  
 As now across the desert of the shore ;  
 Mountains are cleft before you as the sea  
 Before the wandering tribe of Israel's sons ;  
 Still onward rolls the thunderous caravan.  
 Its coming printed on the western sky,  
 A cloud by day, by night a pillar'd flame ;  
 Your prophets are a hundred unto one  
 Of them of old who cried, 'Thus saith the Lord' ;  
 They told of cities that should fall in heaps.  
 But yours of mightier cities that shall rise  
 Where yet the lonely fishers spread their nets,  
 Where hides the fox and hoots the midnight owl ;  
 The tree of knowledge in your garden grows  
 Not single, but at every humble door :  
 Its branches lend you their immortal food,  
 That fills you with the sense of what ye are,  
 No servants of an altar hewed and carved  
 From senseless stone by craft of human hands,  
 Rabbi, or dervish, brahmin, bishop, bonze,  
 But masters of the charm with which they work  
 To keep your hands from that forbidden tree !

Ye that have tasted that divinest fruit,  
 Look on this world of yours with opened eyes !  
 Ye are as gods ! Nay, makers of your gods—  
 Each day ye break an image in your shrine  
 And plant a fairer image where it stood :  
 Where is the Moloch of your father's creed,  
 Whose fires of torment burned for spanlong babes ?  
 Fit object for a tender mother's love !  
 Why not ? It was a bargain duly made  
 For these same infants through the surety's act  
 Entrusted with their all for earth and heaven,  
 By him who chose their guardian, knowing well  
 His fitness for the task—this, even this,  
 Was the true doctrine only yesterday  
 As thoughts are reckoned—and to day you hear  
 In words that sound as if from human tongues  
 Those monstrous, uncouth horrors of the past  
 That blot the blue of heaven and shame of earth  
 As would the saurians of the age of slime,  
 Awaking from their stony sepulchres  
 And wallowing hateful in the eye of day.

Four of us listened to these lines as the young man read them—the Master and myself and our two ladies. This was the little party we got up to hear him read. I do not think much of it was very new to the Master or myself. At any rate, he said to me when we were alone :

'That is the kind of talk the "natural man," as the theologians call him, is apt to fall into.'

'I thought it was the Apostle Paul, and not the theologians, that used the term "natural man," I ventured to suggest.

'I should like to know where the Apostle Paul learned English,' said the Master, with the look of one who does not mean to be tripped up if he can help himself. 'But at any rate,' he continued, 'the "natural man," so called, is worth listening to now and then, for he didn't make his nature, and the Devil didn't make it ; and if the Almighty made it, I never saw or heard of anything he made that wasn't worth attending to.'

The young man begged the Lady to pardon anything that might sound harshly in these crude thoughts of his. He had been taught strange things, he said, from old theologies, when he was a child, and had thought his way out of many of his early superstitions. As for the Young Girl, our Scheherazade, he said to her that she must have got dreadfully tired (at which she coloured up and said it was no such thing), and he promised that, to pay her for her goodness in listening, he would give her a lesson in astronomy the next fair evening, if she would be his scholar, at which she blushed deeper than before, and said something which certainly was not No.

## IX.

THERE was no sooner a vacancy on our side of the table, than the Master proposed a change of seats which would bring the Young Astronomer into our immediate neighbourhood. The Scarabee was to move into the place of our late unlamented associate, the Man of Letters, so called. I was to take his place, the Master to take mine, and the young man that which had been occupied by the Master. The advantages of this change were obvious. The Old Master likes an audience, plainly enough ; and with myself on one side of him and the young student of science, whose speculative turn is sufficiently shown in the passages from his poem, on the other side, he may feel quite sure of being listened to. There is only one trouble in the arrangement, and that is that it brings this young man not only close to us, but also next to our Scheherazade.

I am obliged to confess that he has shown occasional marks of inattention even while the Master was discoursing in a way that I found agreeable enough. I am quite sure it is no intentional disrespect to the Old Master. It seems to me rather that he has become interested in the astronomical lessons he has been giving the Young Girl. He has studied so much alone, that it is naturally a pleasure to him to impart some of his knowledge. As for his young pupil, she has often thought of being a teacher herself, so that she is of course very glad to acquire any accomplishment that may be useful to her in that capacity. I do not see any reason why some of the boarders should have made such remarks as they have done. One cannot teach astronomy to advantage without going out of doors, though I confess that when two young people go out *by daylight* to study the stars, as these young folks have done once or twice, I do not so much wonder at a remark or suggestion from those who have nothing better to do than study their neighbours.

I ought to have told the reader before this that I found, as I suspected, that our innocent-looking Scheherazade was at the bottom of the popgun business. I watched her very closely, and one day, when the little monkey made us all laugh by stopping the Member of the Haouse in the middle of a speech he was repeating to us—it was his great effort of the season on a bill for the protection of horn-pout in Little Muddy River, I caught her making the signs that set him going. At a slight tap of her knife against her plate, he got all ready, and presently I saw her cross her knife and fork upon her plate, and as she did so, pop ! went the small piece of artillery. The Member of the Haouse was just saying that this bill hit his constitooents in their most vital—when a pellet hit him in the feature of his countenance

most exposed to aggressions and least tolerant of liberties. The Member resented this unparliamentary treatment by jumping up from his chair and giving the small aggressor a good shaking, at the same time seizing the implement which had caused his wrath and breaking it into splinters. The Boy blubbered, the Young Girl changed colour and looked as if she would cry, and that was the last of these interruptions.

I must own that I have sometimes wished we had the popgun back, for it answered all the purpose of 'the previous question' in a deliberative assembly. No doubt the Young Girl was capricious in setting the little engine at work, but she cut short a good many disquisitions that threatened to be tedious. I find myself often wishing for her and her small fellow conspirator's intervention, in company where I am supposed to be enjoying myself. When my friend the politician gets too far into the personal details of the *quorum pars magna fui*, I find myself all at once exclaiming in mental articulation, Popgun! When my friend the story-teller begins that protracted narrative which has often emptied me of all my voluntary laughter for the evening, he has got but a very little way when I say to myself, What wouldn't I give for a pellet from that popgun! In short, so useful has that trivial implement proved as a jaw-stopper, and a *boreicide*, that I never go to a club or a dinner-party, without wishing the company included our Scheherazade and That Boy with his popgun.

How clearly I see now into the mechanism of the Young Girl's audacious contrivance for regulating our table-talk! Her brain is tired half the time, and she is too nervous to listen patiently to what a quieter person would like well enough, or at least would not be annoyed by. It amused her to invent a scheme for managing the headstrong talkers, and also let off a certain spirit of mischief which in some of these nervous girls shows itself in much more questionable forms. How cunning these half-hysteric young persons are, to be sure! I had to watch a long time before I detected the telegraphic communication between the two conspirators. I have no doubt she had sedulously schooled the little monkey to his business, and found great delight in the task of instruction.

But now that our Scheherazade has become a scholar instead of a teacher, she seems to be undergoing a remarkable transformation. Astronomy is indeed a noble science. It may well kindle the enthusiasm of a youthful nature. I fancy at times that I see something of that starry light which I noticed in the young man's eyes gradually kindling in her. But can it be astronomy alone that does it? Her colour comes and goes more readily than when the Old Master sat next her on the left. It is having this young man at her side, I suppose. Of course it is. I watch her with great, I may say tender, interest. If he

would only fall in love with her, seize upon her wandering affections and fancies as the Romans seized the Sabine virgins, lift her out of herself and her listless and weary drudgeries, stop the overflow of this young life which is draining itself away in forced literary labour—dear me, dear me—if, if, if—

‘If I were God  
An’ ye were Martin Elginbrod!’

I am afraid all this may never be. I fear that he is too much given to lonely study, to self-companionship, to all sorts of questionings, to looking at life as at a solemn show where he is only a spectator. I dare not build up a romance on what I have yet seen. My reader may, but I will answer for nothing. I shall wait and see.

The Old Master and I have at last made that visit to the Scarabee which we had so long promised ourselves.

When we knocked at his door he came and opened it, instead of saying ‘Come in.’ He was surprised, I have no doubt, at the sound of our footsteps; for he rarely has a visitor, except the little monkey of a boy, and he may have thought a troop of marauders were coming to rob him of his treasures. Collectors feel so rich in the possession of their rarer specimens, that they forget how cheap their precious things seem to common eyes, and are as afraid of being robbed as if they were dealers in diamonds. They have the name of stealing from each other now and then, it is true, but many of their priceless possessions would hardly tempt a beggar. Values are artificial: you will not be able to get ten cents of the year 1799 for a dime.

The Scarabee was reassured as soon as he saw our faces, and he welcomed us not ungraciously into his small apartment. It was hard to find a place to sit down, for all the chairs were already occupied by cases and boxes full of his favourites. I began, therefore, looking round the room. Bugs of every size and aspect met my eyes wherever they turned. I felt for the moment as I suppose a man may feel in a fit of delirium tremens. Presently my attention was drawn towards a very odd-looking insect on the mantel-piece. This animal was incessantly raising its arms as if towards heaven and clasping them together, as though it were wrestling in prayer.

‘Do look at this creature,’ I said to the Master, ‘he seems to be very hard at work at his devotions.’

‘*Mantis religiosa*,’ said the Master, ‘I know the praying rogue. Mighty devout and mighty cruel; crushes everything he can master, or impales it on his spiny sharps and feeds upon it like a gluttonous wretch as he is. I have seen the *Mantis religiosa* on a larger scale than this, now and then. A sacred insect, sir—sacred to many tribes of men; to the Hottentots, to the Turks, yes, sir, and to the Frenchmen, who call the *veacal prie*

*dieu*, and believe him to have special charge of children that have lost their way. Doesn't it seem as if there was a vein of satire as well as of fun that ran through the solemn manifestations of creative wisdom? And of deception too; do you see how nearly those dried leaves resemble an insect?

'They do, indeed,' I answered, 'but not so closely as to deceive me. They *remind* me of an insect, but I could not mistake them for one.'

'O, you couldn't mistake those dried leaves for an insect, hey? Well, how can you mistake that insect for dried leaves? That is the question; for insect it is, *phyllum siccifolium*, the "walking leaf," as some have called it.' The Master had a hearty laugh at my expense.

The Scarabee did not seem to be amused at the Master's remarks or at my blunder. Science is always perfectly serious to him; and he would no more laugh over anything connected with his study, than a clergyman would laugh at a funeral.

'They send me all sorts of trumpery,' he said, 'Orthoptera and Lepidoptera; as if a coleopterist—a scarabeeist—cared for such things. This business is no boy's play to me. The insect population of the world is not even catalogued yet, and a lifetime given to the scarabees is a small contribution enough to their study. I like your men of general intelligence well enough—your Linnæuses and your Buffons and your Cuviers; but Cuvier had to go to Latreille for his insects, and if Latreille had been able to consult me—yes, me, gentlemen! he wouldn't have made the blunders he did about some of the coleoptera.'

The Old Master, as I think you must have found out by this time, you, Beloved, I mean, who read every word, has a reasonably good opinion, as perhaps he has a right to have, of his own intelligence and acquirements. The Scarabee's exultation and glow as he spoke of the errors of the great entomologist which he himself could have corrected, had the effect on the Old Master which a lusty crow has upon the feathered champion of the neighbouring barn-yard. He too knew something about insects. Had he not discovered a new *tabanus*? Had he not made preparations of the very coleoptera the Scarabee studied so exclusively—preparations which the illustrious Swammerdam would not have been ashamed of, and dissected a *melolontha* as exquisitely as Strauss Durckheim himself ever did it? So the Master, recalling these studies of his and certain difficult and disputed points at which he had laboured in one of his entomological paroxysms, put a question which there can be little doubt was intended to puzzle the Scarabee, and perhaps—for the best of us is human (I am beginning to love the Old Master, but he has his little weaknesses, thank Heaven, like the rest of us)—I say *perhaps*, was meant to show that some folks knew as much about some things as some other folks.

The little dried-up specialist did not dilate into fighting dimensions as—*perhaps*, again—the Master may have thought he would. He looked a mild surprise, but remained as quiet as one of his own beetles when you touch him and he makes believe he is dead. The blank silence became oppressive. Was the Scarabee crushed, as so many of his namesakes are crushed, under the heel of this trampling omniscient?

At last the Scarabee creaked out very slowly, 'Did I understand you to ask the following question, to wit?' and so forth; for I was quite out of my depth, and only know that he repeated the Master's somewhat complex inquiry, word for word.

'That was exactly my question,' said the Master, 'and I hope it is not uncivil to ask one which seems to me to be a puzzler.'

'Not uncivil in the least,' said the Scarabee, with something as much like a look of triumph as his dry face permitted, 'not uncivil at all, but a rather extraordinary question to ask at this date of entomological history. I settled that question some years ago, by a series of dissections, six-and-thirty in number, reported in an essay I can show you and would give you a copy of, but that I am a little restricted in my revenue, and our Society has to be economical, so I have but this one. You see, sir,' and he went on with elytra and antennæ and tarsi and metatarsi and tracheæ and stomata and wing-muscles and leg-muscles and ganglions, all plain enough, I do not doubt, to those accustomed to handling dor-bugs and squash-bugs and such undesirable objects of affection to all but naturalists.

He paused when he got through, not for an answer, for there evidently was none, but to see how the Master would take it. The Scarabee had had it all his own way.

The Master was loyal to his own generous nature. He felt as a peaceful citizen might feel who had squared off at a stranger for some supposed wrong, and suddenly discovered that he was undertaking to chastise Mr. Dick Curtis 'the pet of the Fancy,' or Mr. Joshua Hudson, 'the John Bull fighter.'

He felt the absurdity of his discomfiture, for he turned to me goodnaturedly, and said—

' "Poor Johnny Raw! What madness could impel  
So rum a flat to face so prime a swell?" '

To tell the truth, I rather think the Master enjoyed his own defeat. The Scarabee had a right to his victory; a man does not give his life to the study of a single limited subject for nothing, and the moment we come across a first-class expert we begin to take a pride in his superiority. It cannot offend us, who have no right at all to be his match on his own ground. Besides, there is a very curious sense of satisfaction in getting a fair chance to sneer at ourselves and scoff at our own pretensions.



The first person of our dual consciousness has been smirking and rubbing his hands and felicitating himself on his innumerable superiorities, until we have grown a little tired of him. Then, when the other fellow, the critic, the cynic, the Shimei, who has been quiet, letting self-love and self-glorification have their perfect work, opens fire upon the first half of our personality and overwhelms it with that wonderful vocabulary of abuse of which he is the unrivalled master, there is no denying that he enjoys it immensely ; and as he is ourself for the moment, or at least the chief portion of ourself (the other half-self retiring into a dim corner of semiconsciousness and cowering under the storm of sneers and contumely—you follow me perfectly, Beloved—the way is as plain as the path of the babe to the maternal fount), as, I say, the abusive fellow is the chief part of us for the time, and *he* likes to exercise his slanderous vocabulary, *we* on the whole enjoy a brief season of self-depreciation and self-scolding very heartily.

It is quite certain that both of us, the Master and myself, conceived on the instant a respect for the Scarabee which we had not before felt. He had grappled with one difficulty at any rate and mastered it. He had settled one thing, at least so it appeared, in such a way that it was not to be brought up again. And now he was determined, if it cost him the effort of all his remaining days, to close another discussion and put forever to rest the anxious doubts about the larva of *meloe*.

‘Your thirty-six dissections must have cost you a deal of time and labour,’ the Master said.

‘What have I to do with time, but to fill it up with labour?’ asked the Scarabee. ‘It is my meat and drink to work over my beetles. My holidays are when I get a rare specimen. My rest is to watch the habits of insects—those that I do not pretend to study. Here is my *muscarium*, my home for house-flies ; very interesting creatures ; here they breed and buzz, and feed and enjoy themselves, and die in a good old age of a few months. My favourite insect lives in this other case ; she is at home, but in her private chamber ; you shall see her.’

He tapped on the glass lightly, and a large, gray, hairy spider came forth from the hollow of a funnel-like web.

‘And this is all the friend you have to love?’ said the Master, with a tenderness in his voice which made the question very significant.

‘Nothing else loves me better than she does that I know of,’ he answered.

To think of it ! Not even a dog to lick his hand, or a cat to purr or rub her fur against him ! Oh, these boarding-houses, these boarding-houses ! What forlorn people one sees stranded on their desolate shores ! Decayed gentlewomen with the poor

wrecks of what once made their households beautiful, disposed around them in narrow chambers as they best may be, coming down day after day, poor souls! to sit at the board with strangers; their hearts full of sad memories which have no language but a sigh, no record but the lines of sorrow on their features; orphans, creatures with growing tendrils and nothing to cling to; lonely rich men, casting about them what to do with the wealth they never knew how to enjoy, when they shall no longer worry over keeping and increasing it; young men and young women, left to their instincts, unguarded, unwatched, save by malicious eyes, which are sure to be found and to find occupation in these miscellaneous collections of human beings; and now and then a shred of humanity, like this little adust specialist, with just the resources needed to keep the 'radical moisture' from entirely exhaling from his attenuated organism, and busying himself over a point of science, or compiling a hymn-book, or editing a grammar or a dictionary. Such are the tenants of boarding-houses whom we cannot think of without feeling how sad it is when the wind is not tempered to the shorn lamb; when the solitary, whose hearts are shrivelling, are not set in families!

The Master was greatly interested in the Scarabee's muscarium.

'I don't remember,' he said, 'that I have heard of such a thing as that before. Mighty curious creatures, these same house-flies! Talk about miracles! Was there ever anything more miraculous, so far as our common observation goes, than the coming and the going of these creatures? Why didn't Job ask where the flies come from and where they go to? I did not say that you and I don't know, but how many people do know anything about it? Where are the cradles of the young flies? Where are the cemeteries of the dead ones, or do they die at all except when we kill them? You think all the flies of the year are dead and gone, and there comes a warm day, and all at once there is a general resurrection of 'em; they had been taking a nap, that is all.'

'I suppose you do not trust your spider in the Muscarium?' said I, addressing the Scarabee.

'Not exactly,' he answered, 'she is a terrible creature. She loves me, I think, but she is a killer and a cannibal among other insects. I wanted to pair her with a male spider, but it wouldn't do.'

'Wouldn't do?' said I, 'why not? Don't spiders have their mates as well as other folks?'

'Oh yes, sometimes; but the females are apt to be particular, and if they don't like the mate you offer them they fall upon him and kill him and eat him up. You see they are a great deal bigger and stronger than the males, and they are always hungry.'

and not always particularly anxious to have one of the other sex bothering round.'

'Woman's rights?' said I, 'there you have it! Why don't those talking ladies take a spider as their emblem? Let them form arachnoid associations—spinsters and spiders would be a good motto.'

The Master smiled. I think it was an eleemosynary smile, for my pleasantry seems to me a particularly *basso rilievo*, as I look upon it in cold blood. But conversation at the best is only a thin sprinkling of occasional felicities set in platitudes and common-places. I never heard people talk like the characters in the 'School for Scandal'—I should very much like to. I say the Master smiled. But the Scarabee did not relax a muscle of his countenance.

There are persons whom the very mildest of *facetiae* sets off into such convulsions of laughter, that one is afraid lest they should injure themselves. Even when a jest misses fire completely, so that it is no jest at all, but only a jocular intention, they laugh just as heartily. Leave out the point of your story, get the word wrong on the duplicity of which the pun that was to excite hilarity depended, and they still honour your abortive attempt with the most lusty and vociferous merriment.

There is a very opposite class of persons whom anything in the nature of a joke perplexes, troubles, and even sometimes irritates, seeming to make them think they are trifled with, if not insulted. If you are fortunate enough to set the whole table laughing, one of this class of persons will look inquiringly round, as if something had happened, and, seeing everybody apparently amused but himself, feel as if he was being laughed at, or, at any rate, as if something had been said which he was not to hear. Often, however, it does not go so far as this, and there is nothing more than mere insensibility to the cause of other people's laughter, a sort of joke-blindness, comparable to the well-known colour-blindness with which many persons are afflicted as a congenital incapacity.

I have never seen the Scarabee smile. I have seen him take off his goggles—he breakfasts in these occasionally—I suppose when he has been tiring his poor old eyes out over night gazing through his microscope—I have seen him take his goggles off, I say, and stare about him when the rest of us were laughing at something which amused us, but his features betrayed nothing more than a certain bewilderment as if we had been foreigners talking in an unknown tongue. I do not think it was a mere fancy of mine that he bears a kind of resemblance to the tribe of insects he gives his life to studying. His shiny black coat; his rounded back, convex with years of stooping over his minute work; his angular movements made natural to him by his habitual style of manipulation; the aridity of his organism, with

which his voice is in perfect keeping :—all these marks of his special sedentary occupation are so nearly what might be expected, and indeed so much in accordance with the more general fact that a man's aspect is subdued to the look of what he works in, that I do not feel disposed to accuse myself of exaggeration in my account of the Scarabee's appearance. But I think he has learned something else of his coleopterous friends. The beetles never smile. Their physiognomy is not adapted to the display of the emotions ; the lateral movement of their jaws being effective for alimentary purposes, but very limited in its gamut of expression. It is with these unemotional beings that the Scarabee passes his life. He has but one object, and that is perfectly serious, to his mind, in fact, of absorbing interest and importance. In one aspect of the matter he is quite right, for if the Creator has taken the trouble to make one of his creatures in just such a way and not otherwise, from the beginning of its existence on our planet in ages of unknown remoteness to the present time, the man who first explains His idea to us is charged with a revelation. It is by no means impossible that there may be angels in the celestial hierarchy to whom it would be new and interesting. I have often thought that spirits of a higher order than man might be willing to learn something from a human mind like that of Newton, and I see no reason why an angelic being might not be glad to hear a lecture from Mr. Huxley, or Mr. Tyndall, or one of our friends at Cambridge.

I have been sinuous as the links of Forth seen from Stirling Castle, or as that other river which threads the Berkshire valley and runs, a perennial stream, through my memory—from which I please myself with thinking that I have learned to wind without fretting against the shore, or forgetting where I am flowing—sinuous, I say, but not jerky—no, not jerky or hard to follow for a reader of the right sort, in the prime of life and full possession of his or her faculties.

All this last page or so, you readily understand, has been my private talk with you, the Reader. The *cue* of the conversation which I interrupted by this digression is to be found in the words 'a good motto,' from which I begin my account of the visit again.

'Do you receive many visitors, I mean vertebrates, not articulates?' said the Master.

I thought this question might perhaps bring *il disiato riso*, the long-wished-for smile, but the Scarabee interpreted it in the simplest zoölogical sense, and neglected its hint of playfulness with the most absolute unconsciousness, apparently, of anything not entirely serious and literal.

'You mean friends, I suppose,' he answered ; 'I have correspondents, but I have no friends except this spider. I live alone, except when I go to my subsection meetings ; I get a box of

insects now and then, and send a few beetles to coleopterists in other entomological districts ; but science is exacting, and a man that wants to leave his record has not much time for friendship. There is no great chance either for making friends among naturalists. People that are at work on different things do not care a great deal for each other's specialties, and people that work on the same thing are always afraid lest one should get ahead of the other, or steal some of his ideas before he has made them public. There are none too many people you can trust in your laboratory. I thought I had a friend once, but he watched me at work and stole the discovery of a new species from me, and, what is more, had it named after himself. Since that time I have liked spiders better than men. They are hungry and savage, but at any rate they spin their own webs out of their own insides. I like very well to talk with gentlemen that *play* with my branch of entomology ; I do not doubt it amused you, and if *you* want to see anything I can show you, I shall have no scruple in letting you see it. I have never had any complaint to make of amateurs.'

Upon my honour—I would hold my right hand up and take my Bible-oath, if it was not busy with the pen at this moment—I do not believe the Scarabee had the least idea in the world of the satire on the student of the Order of Things implied in his invitation to the 'amateur.' As for the Master, he stood fire perfectly, as he always does ; but the idea that he, who had worked a considerable part of several seasons at examining and preparing insects, who believed himself to have given a new *tabanus* to the catalogue of native diptera, the idea that *he* was playing with science, and might be trusted anywhere as a harmless amateur, from whom no expert could possibly fear any anticipation of his unpublished discoveries, went beyond anything set down in that book of his which contained so much of the strainings of his wisdom.

The poor little Scarabee began fidgeting round about this time, and uttering some half-audible words, apologetical, partly, and involving an allusion to refreshments. As he spoke, he opened a small cupboard, and as he did so out bolted an uninvited tenant of the same, long in person, sable in hue, and swift of movement, on seeing which the Scarabee simply said, without emotion '*blatta*,' but I, forgetting what was due to good manners, exclaimed '*cockroach* !'

We could not make up our minds to tax the Scarabee's hospitality, already levied upon by the voracious articulate. So we both alleged a state of utter repletion, and did not solve the mystery of the contents of the cupboard—not too luxurious, it may be conjectured, and yet kindly offered, so that we felt there was a moist filament of the social instinct running like a nerve through that exsiccated and almost anhydrous organism.

We left him with professions of esteem and respect which were real. We had gone, not to scoff, but very probably to smile, and I will not say we did not. But the Master was more thoughtful than usual.

‘If I had not solemnly dedicated myself to the study of the Order of Things,’ he said, ‘I do verily believe I would give what remains to me of life to the investigation of some single point I could utterly eviscerate and leave finally settled for the instruction and, it may be, the admiration of all coming time. The keel ploughs ten thousand leagues of ocean and leaves no trace of its deep-graven furrows. The chisel scars only a few inches on the face of a rock, but the story it has traced is read by a hundred generations. The eagle leaves no track of his path, no memory of the place where he built his nest : but a patient mollusc has bored a little hole in a marble column of the temple of Serapis, and the monument of his labour outlasts the altar and the statue of the divinity.’

‘Whew!’ said I to myself, ‘that sounds a little like what we college-boys used to call a “squirt.”’ The Master guessed my thought, and said, smiling :

‘That is from one of my old lectures. A man’s tongue wags along quietly enough, but his pen begins prancing as soon as it touches paper. I know what you are thinking ; you’re thinking that it is a *squirt*. That word has taken the nonsense out of a good many high-stepping fellows. But it did a good deal of harm too, and it was a vulgar lot that applied it oftenest.’

I am at last perfectly satisfied that our Landlady has no designs on the Capitalist, and as well convinced that any fancy of mine that he was like to make love to her was a mistake. The good woman is too much absorbed in her children, and more especially in ‘the doctor,’ as she delights to call her son, to be the prey of any foolish desire of changing her condition. She is doing very well as it is, and if the young man succeeds, as I have little question that he will, I think it probable enough that she will retire from her position as the head of a boarding-house. We have all liked the good woman who have lived with her—I mean we three friends who have put ourselves on record. Her talk, I must confess, is a little diffuse and not always absolutely correct, according to the standard of the great Worcester ; she is subject to lachrymose cataclysms and semiconvulsive upheavals when she reverts in memory to her past trials, and especially when she recalls the virtues of her deceased spouse, who was, I suspect, an adjunct such as one finds not rarely annexed to a capable matron in charge of an establishment like hers ; that is to say, an easy-going, harmless, fetch-and-carry, carve-and-help, get-out-of-the-way kind of neuter, who comes

liberality of judgment of any of the straiter sects, he has only to hand over that chest of rouleaux to the trustees of one of its educational institutions for the endowment of two or three professorships. If he would dream of being remembered by coming generations, what monument so enduring as a college building that shall bear his name, and even when its solid masonry shall crumble, give place to another still charged with the same sacred duty of perpetuating his remembrance. Who was Sir Matthew Holworthy, that his name is a household word on the lips of thousands of scholars, and will be centuries hence, as that of Walter de Merton, dead six hundred years ago, is to-day at Oxford? Who was Mistress Holden, that she should be blessed among women by having her name spoken gratefully, and the little edifice she caused to be erected preserved as her monument from generation to generation? All these possibilities, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life; the tears of grateful orphans by the gallon; the prayers of Westminster Assembly's Catechism divines by the thousand; the masses of priests by the century—all these things, and more, if more there be that the imagination of a lover of gold is like to range over, the miser hears and sees and feels and hugs and enjoys as he paddles with his lean hands among the sliding, shining, ringing, innocent-looking bits of yellow metal, toying with them as the lion-tamer handles the great carnivorous monster, whose might and whose terrors are child's play to the latent forces and power of harm-doing of the glittering counters played with in the great game between angels and devils.

I have seen a good deal of misers, and I think I understand them as well as most persons do. But the Capitalist's economy in rags and his liberality to the young doctor are very oddly contrasted with each other. I should not be surprised at any time to hear that he had endowed a scholarship or professorship or built a college dormitory, in spite of his curious parsimony in old linen.

I do not know where our Young Astronomer got the notions that he expresses so freely in the lines that follow. I think the statement is true, however, which I see in one of the most popular Cyclopædias, that 'the *non-clerical* mind in all ages is disposed to look favourably upon the doctrine of the universal restoration to holiness and happiness of all fallen intelligences, whether human or angelic.' Certainly most of the poets who have reached the heart of men, since Burns dropped the tear for poor 'auld Nickieben' that softened the stony-hearted theology of Scotland, have had 'non-clerical' minds, and I suppose our young friend is in his humble way an optimist like them. What he says in verse is very much the same thing as what is said in prose in all companies, and thought by a great



many who are thankful to anybody that will say it for them—not a few clerical as well as 'non-clerical' persons among them.

## WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

## V.

What am I but the creature Thou hast made?  
 What have I save the blessings Thou has lent?  
 What hope I but Thy mercy and Thy love?  
 Who but myself shall cloud my soul with fear?  
 Whose hand protect me from myself but Thine?  
 I claim the rights of weakness, I, the babe,  
 Call on my Sire to shield me from the ills  
 That still beset my path, not trying me  
 With snares beyond my wisdom or my strength,  
 He knowing I shall use them to my harm,  
 And find a tenfold misery in the sense  
 That in my childlike folly I have sprung  
 The trap upon myself as vermin use,  
 Drawn by the cunning bait to certain doom.  
 Who wrought the wondrous charm that leads us on  
 To sweet perdition, but the self-same Power  
 That set the fearful engine to destroy  
 His wretched offspring (as the Rabbis tell),  
 And hid His yawning jaws and treacherous springs  
 In such a show of innocent sweet flowers  
 It lured the sinless angels and they fell?

Ah! He who prayed the prayer of all mankind  
 Summed in those few brief words the mightiest plea  
 For erring souls before the courts of heaven—  
*Save us from being tempted—lest we fall!*  
 If we are only as the potter's clay  
 Made to be fashioned as the artist wills,  
 And broken into shards if we offend  
 The eye of Him who made us, it is well;  
 Such love as the insensate lump of clay  
 That spins upon the swift-revolving wheel  
 Bears to the hand that shapes its growing form—  
 Such love, no more, will be our hearts' return  
 To the great Master-workman for His care—  
 Or would be, save that this, our breathing clay  
 Is interwin'd with fine innumerable threads  
 That make it conscious in its Framer's hand;  
 And this He must remember who has filled  
 These vessels with the deadly draught of life—  
 Life, that means death to all it claims. Our love  
 Must kindle in the ray that streams from heaven;  
 A faint reflection of the light divine;  
 The sun must warm the earth before the rose  
 Can show her inmost heart-leaves to the sun.

He yields some fraction of the Maker's right  
 Who gives the quivering nerve its sense of pain;  
 Is there not something in the pleading eye  
 Of the poor brute that suffers, which arraigns

The law that bids it suffer? Has it not  
 A claim for some remembrance in the book  
 That fills its pages with the idle words  
 Spoken of men? Or is it only clay,  
 Bleeding and aching in the potter's hand,  
 Yet all his own to treat it as he will  
 And when he will to cast it at his feet,  
 Shattered, dishonoured, lost for evermore?  
 My dog loves me, but could he look beyond  
 His earthly master, would his love extend  
 To Him who—Hush! I will not doubt that He  
 Is better than our fears, and will not wrong  
 The least, the meanest of created things!

He would not trust me with the smallest orb  
 That circles through the sky; He would not give  
 A meteor to my guidance; would not leave  
 The colouring of a cloudlet to my hand;  
 He locks my beating heart beneath its bars  
 And keeps the key Himself; He measures out  
 The draughts of vital breath that warm my blood,  
 Winds up the springs of instinct which uncoil,  
 Each in its season; ties me to my home,  
 My race, my time, my nation, and my creed  
 So closely that if I but slip my wrist  
 Out of the band that cuts it to the bone,  
 Men say 'He hath a devil;' He has lent  
 All that I hold in trust, as unto one  
 By reason of his weakness and his years  
 Not fit to hold the smallest shred in fee  
 Of those most common things He calls His own—  
 And yet—my Rabbi tells me—He has left  
 The care of that to which a million worlds  
 Filled with unconscious life were less than naught,  
 Has left that mighty universe, the Soul,  
 To the weak guidance of our baby hands,  
 Turned us adrift with our immortal charge,  
 Let the foul fiends have access at their will,  
 Taking the shape of angels, to our hearts—  
 Our hearts already poisoned through and through  
 With the fierce virus of ancestral sin.  
 If what my Rabbi tells me is the truth,  
 Why did the choir of angels sing for joy?  
 Heaven must be compassed in a narrow space,  
 And offer more than room enough for all  
 That pass its portals; but the underworld,  
 The godless realm, the place where demons forge  
 Their fiery darts and adamant chains,  
 Must swarm with ghosts that for a little while  
 Had worn the garb of flesh, and being heirs  
 Of all the dulness of their stolid sires,  
 And all the erring instincts of their tribe,  
 Nature's own teaching, rudiments of 'sin,'  
 Fell headlong in the snare that could not fail  
 To trap the wretched creatures shaped of clay  
 And cursed with sense enough to lose their souls!

Brother, thy heart is troubled at my word ;  
 Sister, I see the cloud is on thy brow.  
 He will not blame me, He who sends not peace,  
 But sends a sword, and bids us strike amain  
 At Error's gilded crest, where in the van  
 Of earth's great army, mingling with the best  
 And bravest of its leaders, shouting loud  
 The battle-cries that yesterday have led  
 The host of Truth to victory, but to-day  
 Are watchwords of the laggard and the slave,  
 He leads His dazzled cohorts. God has made  
 This world a strife of atoms and of spheres ;  
 With every breath I sigh myself away  
 And take my tribute from the wandering wind  
 To fan the flame of life's consuming fire ;  
 So while my thought has life, it needs must burn,  
 And burning, set the stubble-fields ablaze,  
 Where the harvest long ago was reaped  
 And safely garnered in the ancient barns,  
 But still the gleaners, groping for their food,  
 Go blindly feeling through the close-shorn straw,  
 While the young reapers flash their glittering steel  
 Where later suns have ripened nobler grain !

We listened to these lines in silence. They were evidently written honestly, and with feeling, and no doubt meant to be reverential. I thought, however, the Lady looked rather serious as he finished reading. The Young Girl's cheeks were flushed, but she was not in the mood for criticism.

As we came away the Master said to me, 'The stubble-fields are mighty slow to take fire. These young fellows catch up with the world's ideas one after another—they have been tamed a long while, but they find them running loose in their minds, and think they are *feræ naturæ*. They remind me of young sportsmen who fire at the first feathers they see, and bring down a barn-yard fowl. But the chicken may be worth bagging for all that,' he said good-humouredly.

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## X.

*CAVEAT lector.* Let the reader look out for himself. The Old Master, whose words I have so frequently quoted and shall quote more of, is a dogmatist who lays down the law, *ex cathedra*, from the chair of his own personality. I do not deny that he has the ambition of knowing something about a greater number of subjects than any one man ought to meddle with, except in a very humble and modest way. And that is not his way. There was no doubt something of humorous bravado in his saying that the

actual 'order of things' did not offer a field sufficiently ample for his intelligence. But if I found fault with him, which would be easy enough, I should say that he holds and expresses definite opinions about matters that he could afford to leave open questions, or ask the judgment of others about. But I do not want to find fault with him. If he does not settle all the points he speaks of so authoritatively, he sets me thinking about them, and I like a man as a companion who is not afraid of a half-truth. I know he says some things peremptorily that he may inwardly debate with himself. There are two ways of dealing with assertions of this kind. One may attack them on the false side, and perhaps gain a conversational victory. But I like better to take them up on the true side, and see how much can be made of that aspect of the dogmatic assertion. It is the only comfortable way of dealing with persons like the Old Master.

There have been three famous talkers in Great Britain, either of whom would illustrate what I say about dogmatists well enough for my purpose. You cannot doubt to what three I refer: Samuel the First, Samuel the Second, and Thomas, last of the Dynasty. (I mean the living Thomas, and not Thomas B.)

I say *the last* of the Dynasty, for the conversational dogmatist on the imperial scale becomes every year more and more an impossibility. If he is in intelligent company he will be almost sure to find some one who knows more about some of the subjects he generalises upon than any wholesale thinker who handles knowledge by the cargo is like to know. I find myself, at certain intervals, in the society of a number of experts in science, literature, and art, who cover a pretty wide range, taking them altogether, of human knowledge. I have not the least doubt that if the great Dr. Samuel Johnson should come in and sit with this company at one of their Saturday dinners, he would be listened to, as he always was, with respect and attention. But there are subjects upon which the great talker could speak magisterially in his time and at his club, upon which so wise a man would express himself guardedly at the meeting where I have supposed him a guest. We have a scientific man or two among us, for instance, who would be entitled to smile at the good Doctor's estimate of their labours, as I give it here:

'Of those that spin out life in trifles and die without a memorial, many flatter themselves with high opinion of their own importance and imagine that they are every day adding some improvement to human life.'—'Some turn the wheel of electricity, some suspend rings to a loadstone, and find that what they did yesterday they can do again to-day. Some register the changes of the wind, and die fully convinced that the wind is changeable.'

'There are ~~men~~ yet more profound, who have heard that two colourless liquors may produce a colour by union, and that two cold bodies will grow hot if they are mingled; they mingle them, and ~~produce the effect expected~~, say it is strange, and mingle them again.'

I cannot transcribe this extract without an intense inward delight in its wit and a full recognition of its thorough half-truthfulness. Yet if while the great moralist is indulging in these vivacities, he can be imagined as receiving a message from Mr. Boswell or Mrs. Thrale flashed through the depths of the ocean, we can suppose he might be tempted to indulge in another oracular utterance, something like this :

'A wise man recognises the convenience of a general statement, but he bows to the authority of a particular fact. He who would bound the possibilities of human knowledge by the limitations of present acquirements would take the dimensions of the infant in ordering the habiliments of the adult. It is the province of knowledge to speak, and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen. Will the Professor have the kindness to inform me by what steps of gradual development the ring and the loadstone, which were but yesterday the toys of children and idlers, have become the means of approximating the intelligence of remote continents, and wafting emotions unchilled through the abysses of the no longer unfathomable deep ?'

This, you understand, Beloved, is only a conventional imitation of the Doctor's style of talking. He wrote in grand balanced phrases, but his conversation was good, lusty, off-hand, familiar talk. He used very often to have it all his own way. If he came back to us, we must remember that to treat him fairly we must suppose him on a level with the knowledge of our own time. But that knowledge is more specialised a great deal than knowledge was in his day. Men cannot talk about things they have seen from the outside with the same magisterial authority the talking dynasty pretended to. The sturdy old moralist felt grand enough, no doubt, when he said, 'He that is growing great and happy by electrifying a bottle, wonders how the world can be engaged by trifling prattle about war or peace.' Benjamin Franklin was one of these idlers who were electrifying bottles, but he also found time to engage in the trifling prattle about war and peace going on in those times. The talking Doctor hits him very hard in 'Taxation no Tyranny': 'Those who wrote the Address (of the American Congress in 1775), though they have shown no great extent or profundity of mind, are yet probably wiser than to believe it : but they have been taught by some master of mischief how to put in motion the engine of political electricity ; to attract by the sounds of Liberty and Property, to repel by those of Popery and Slavery, and to give the great stroke by the name of Boston.'

The talking dynasty has always been hard upon us Americans. King Samuel II. says : ' It is, I believe, a fact verified beyond doubt, that some years ago it was impossible to obtain a copy of the Newgate Calendar, as they had all been bought up by the Americans, whether to suppress the blazon of their forefathers or to assist in their genealogical researches I could never learn satisfactorily.'

As for King Thomas, the last of the monological succession, he made such a piece of work with his prophecies and sarcasms about our little trouble with some of the Southern States, that we came rather to pity him for his whims and crotchets than to get angry with him for calling us bores, and other unamiable names.

I do not think we believe things because considerable people say them, on personal authority, that is, as intelligent listeners very commonly did a century ago. The newspapers have lied that belief out of us. Any man who has a pretty gift of talk may hold his company a little while when there is nothing better stirring. Every now and then a man who may be dull enough prevailingly, has a passion of talk come over him which makes him eloquent and silences the rest.

I have a great respect for these divine paroxysms, these half-inspired moments of influx when they seize one whom we had not counted among the luminaries of the social sphere. But the man who can give us a fresh experience on anything that interests us overrides everybody else. A great peril escaped makes a great story-teller of a common person enough. I remember when a certain vessel was wrecked long ago, that one of the survivors told the story as well as Defoe could have told it. Never a word from him before ; never a word from him since. But when it comes to talking one's common thoughts—those that come and go as the breath does ; those that tread the mental areas and corridors with steady, even footfall, an interminable procession of every hue and garb—there are few, indeed, that can dare to lift the curtain which hangs before the window in the breast and throw open the window, and let us look and listen. We are all loyal enough to our sovereign when he shows himself, but sovereigns are scarce. I never saw the absolute homage of listeners but once, that I remember, to a man's common talk, and that was to the conversation of an old man, illustrious by his lineage and the exalted honours he had won, whose experience had lessons for the wisest, and whose eloquence had made the boldest tremble.

All this because I told you to look out for yourselves and not take for absolute truth everything the Old Master of our table, or anybody else at it, sees fit to utter. At the same time I do not think that he, or any of us whose conversation I think worth re-

porting, says anything for the mere sake of saying it and without thinking that it holds some truth even if it is not unqualifiedly true.

I suppose a certain number of my readers wish very heartily that the Young Astronomer whose poetical speculations I am recording would stop trying by searching to find out the Almighty, and sign the Thirty-Nine Articles or the Westminster Confession of Faith, at any rate slip his neck into some collar or other, and pull quietly in the harness whether it galled him or not. I say, rather, let him have his talk out; if nobody else asks the questions he asks, some will be glad to hear them, but if you, the reader, find the same questions in your own mind, you need not be afraid to see how they shape themselves in another's intelligence. Do you recognise the fact that we are living in a new time? Knowledge—it excites prejudices to call it science—is advancing as irresistibly, as majestically, as remorselessly as the ocean moves in upon the shore. The courtiers of King Canute (I am not afraid of the old comparison), represented by the adherents of the traditional beliefs of the period, move his chair back an inch at a time, but not until his feet are pretty damp, not to say wet. The rock on which he sat securely awhile ago, is completely under water. And now people are walking up and down the beach and judging for themselves how far inland the chair of King Canute is like to be moved while they and their children are looking on at the rate in which it is edging backward. And it is quite too late to go into hysterics about it.

The shore, solid, substantial, a great deal more than eighteen hundred years old, is natural humanity. The beach which the ocean of knowledge—you may call it science if you like—is flowing over, is theological humanity. Somewhere between the Sermon on the Mount and the teachings of Saint Augustine sin was made a transferable chattel. (I leave the interval wide for others to make narrow.)

The doctrine of heritable guilt, with its mechanical consequences, has done for our moral nature what the doctrine of demoniac possession has done in barbarous times, and still does among barbarous tribes for disease. Out of that black cloud came the lightning which struck the compass of humanity. Conscience, which from the dawn of moral being, had pointed to the poles of right and wrong only as the great current of will flowed through the soul, was demagnetized, paralyzed, and knew no fixed meridian, but stayed where the priest or the council placed it. There is nothing to be done but to polarize the needle over again. And for this purpose we must study the lines of direction of all the forces which traverse our human nature.

We must study man as we have studied stars and rocks. We need not go, we are told, to our sacred books for astronomy or



geology or other scientific knowledge. Do not stop there ! Pull Canute's chair back fifty rods at once, and do not wait until he is wet to the knees ! Say now, bravely, as you will sooner or later have to say, that we need not go to any ancient records for our anthropology. Do we not all *hope*, at least, that the doctrine of man's being a blighted abortion, a miserable disappointment to his Creator, and hostile and hateful to him from his birth, may give way to the belief that he is the latest terrestrial manifestation of an ever upward-striving movement of divine power ? If there lives a man who does not *want* to disbelieve the popular notions about the condition and destiny of the bulk of his race, I should like to have him look me in the face and tell me so.

I am not writing for the basement story or the nursery, and I do not pretend to be, but I say nothing in these pages which would not be said without fear of offence in any intelligent circle, such as clergymen of the higher castes are in the habit of frequenting. There are teachers in type for our grandmothers and our grandchildren who vaccinate the two childhoods with wholesome doctrine, transmitted harmlessly from one infant to another. But we three men at our table have taken the disease of thinking in the natural way. It is an epidemic in these times, and those who are afraid of it must shut themselves up close or they will catch it.

I hope none of us are wanting in reverence. One at least of us is a regular church-goer, and believes a man may be devout and yet very free in the expression of his opinions on the gravest subjects. There may be some good people who think that our young friend who puts his thoughts in verse is going sounding over perilous depths, and are frightened every time he throws the lead. There is nothing to be frightened at. This is a manly world we live in. Our reverence is good for nothing if it does not begin with self-respect. Occidental manhood springs from that as its basis ; Oriental manhood finds the greatest satisfaction in self-abasement. There is no use in trying to graft the tropical palm upon the Northern pine. The same divine forces underlie the growth of both, but leaf and flower and fruit must follow the law of race, of soil, of climate. Whether the questions which assail my young friend have risen in my reader's mind or not, he knows perfectly well that nobody can keep such questions from springing up in every young mind of any force or honesty. As for the excellent little wretches who grow up in what they are taught, with never a scruple or a query, Protestant or Catholic, Jew or Mormon, Mahometan or Buddhist, they signify nothing in the intellectual life of the race. If the world had been wholly peopled with such half-vitalized mental negatives, there never would have been a creed like that of Christendom.

I entirely agree with the spirit of the verses I have looked

over, in this point at least, that a true man's allegiance is given to that which is highest in his own nature. He reverences truth, he loves kindness, he respects justice. The two first qualities he understands well enough. But the last, justice, at least as between the Infinite and the finite, has been so utterly dehumanized, disintegrated, decomposed, and diabolized in passing through the minds of the half-civilized banditti who have peopled and unpeopled the world for some scores of generations, that it has become a mere algebraic  $x$ , and has no fixed value whatever as a human conception.

As for *power*, we are outgrowing all superstition about that. We have not the slightest respect for it as such, and it is just as well to remember this in all our spiritual adjustments. We *fear* power when we cannot master it; but just as far as we can master it, we make a slave and a beast of burden of it without hesitation. We cannot change the ebb and flow of the tides, or the course of the seasons, but we come as near it as we can. We dam out the ocean, we make roses blow in winter and water freeze in summer. We have no more reverence for the sun than we have for a fish-tail gas-burner; we stare into his face with telescopes as at a ballet-dancer with opera-glasses; we pick his rays to pieces with prisms as if they were so many skeins of coloured yarn; we tell him we do not want his company and shut him out like a troublesome vagrant. The gods of the old heathen are the servants of to-day. Neptune, Vulcan, Æolus, and the bearer of the thunderbolt himself have stepped down from their pedestals and put on our livery. We cannot always master them, neither can we always master our servant, the horse, but we have put a bridle on the wildest natural agencies. The mob of elemental forces is as noisy and turbulent as ever, but the standing army of civilization keeps it well under, except for an occasional outbreak.

When I read the Lady's letter printed some time since, I could not help honouring the feeling which prompted her in writing it. But while I respect the innocent incapacity of tender age and the limitations of the comparatively uninstructed classes, it is quite out of the question to act as if matters of common intelligence and universal interest were the private property of a secret society, only to be meddled with by those who know the grip and the pass-word.

We must get over the habit of transferring the limitations of the nervous temperament and of hectic constitutions to the great Source of all the mighty forces of nature, animate and inanimate. We may confidently trust that we have over us a Being thoroughly robust and grandly magnanimous, in distinction from the Infinite Invalid bred in the studies of sickly monomaniacs, who corresponds to a very common human type, but makes us blush for him when we contrast him with a truly noble man,

such as most of us have had the privilege of knowing both in public and in private life.

I was not a little pleased to find that the Lady, in spite of her letter, sat through the young man's reading of portions of his poem with a good deal of complacency. I think I can guess what is in her mind. She believes, as so many women do, in that great remedy for discontent, and doubts about humanity, and questionings of Providence, and all sorts of youthful vagaries, —I mean the love-cure. And she thinks, not without some reason, that these astronomical lessons, and these readings of poetry, and daily proximity at the table, and the need of two young hearts that have been long feeling lonely, and youth and nature and 'all impulses of soul and sense,' as Coleridge has it, will bring these two young people into closer relations than they perhaps have yet thought of; and so that sweet lesson of loving the neighbour whom he has seen may lead him into deeper and more trusting communion with the Friend and Father whom he has not seen.

The Young Girl evidently did not intend that her accomplice should be a loser by the summary act of the Member of the House. I took occasion to ask That Boy what had become of all the pop-guns. He gave me to understand that pop-guns were played out, but that he had got a squirt and a whip, and considered himself better off than before.

This great world is full of mysteries. I can comprehend the pleasure to be got out of the hydraulic engine; but what can be the fascination of a *whip*, when one has nothing to flagellate but the calves of his own legs, I could never understand. Yet a small riding-whip is the most popular article with the miscellaneous New-Englander at all great gatherings, cattle-shows and Fourth-of-July celebrations. If Democritus and Heraclitus could walk arm in arm through one of these crowds, the first would be in a broad laugh to see the multitude of young persons who were rejoicing in the possession of one of these useless and worthless little commodities; happy himself to see how easily others could purchase happiness. But the second would weep bitter tears to think what a rayless and barren life that must be which could extract enjoyment from the miserable flimsy wand that has such magic attraction for sauntering youths and simpering maidens. What a dynamometer of happiness are these paltry toys, and what a rudimentary vertebrate must be the freckled adolescent whose yearning for the infinite can be stayed even for a single hour by so trifling a boon from the venal hands of the finite!

Pardon these polysyllabic reflections, Beloved, but I never contemplate these dear fellow-creatures of ours without a delicious sense of superiority to them and to all arrested embryos of intelligence, in which I have no doubt you heartily sympathise.

with me. It is not merely when I look at the vacuous countenances of the *mastigophori*, the whip-holders, that I enjoy this luxury, (though I would not miss that holiday spectacle for a pretty sum of money, and advise you by all means to make sure of it next Fourth of July if you missed it this), but I get the same pleasure from many similar manifestations.

I delight in Regalia, so called, of the kind not worn by kings, nor obtaining their diamonds from the mines of Golconda. I have a passion for those resplendent titles which are not conferred by a sovereign and would not be the *open sesame* to the courts of royalty, yet which are as opulent in impressive adjectives as any Knight of the Garter's list of dignities. When I have recognised in the every-day name of His Very Worthy High Eminence of some cabalistic association, the inconspicuous individual whose trifling indebtedness to me for value received remains in a quiescent state and is likely long to continue so, I confess to having experienced a thrill of pleasure. I have smiled to think how grand his magnificent titular appendages sounded in his own ears and what a feeble tintinnabulation they made in mine. The crimson sash, the broad diagonal belt of the mounted marshal of a great procession, so cheap in themselves, yet so entirely satisfactory to the wearer, tickle my heart's root.

Perhaps I should have enjoyed all these weaknesses of my infantile fellow-creatures without an after-thought, except that on a certain literary anniversary, when I tie the narrow blue and pink ribbons in my button-hole and show my decorated bosom to the admiring public, I am conscious of a certain sense of distinction and superiority in virtue of that trifling addition to my personal adornments which reminds me that I too have some embryonic fibres in my tolerably well-matured organism.

I hope I have not hurt your feelings, if you happen to be a High and Mighty Grand Functionary in any illustrious Fraternity. When I tell you that a bit of ribbon in my button-hole sets my vanity prancing, I think you cannot be grievously offended that I smile at the resonant titles which make you something more than human in your own eyes. I would not for the world be mistaken for one of those literary roughs whose brass knuckles leave their mark on the foreheads of so many inoffensive people.

There is a human sub-species characterised by the coarseness of its fibre and the acrid nature of its intellectual secretions. It is to a certain extent penetrative, as all creatures are which are provided with strings. It has an instinct which guides it to the vulnerable parts of the victim on which it fastens. These two qualities give it a certain degree of power which is not to be despised. It might perhaps be less mischievous, but for the fact that the wound where it leaves its poison opens the fountain from which it draws its nourishment.

Beings of this kind can be useful if they will only find their appropriate sphere, which is not literature, but that circle of rough-and-tumble political life where the fine-fibred men are at a discount, where epithets find their subjects poison-proof, and the sting which would be fatal to a literary *débutante* only wakes the eloquence of the pachydermatous ward-room politician to a fiercer shriek of declamation.

The Master got talking the other day about the difference between races and families. I am reminded of what he said by what I have just been saying myself about coarse-fibred and fine-fibred people.

‘We talk about a Yankee, a New-Englander,’ he said, ‘as if all of ’em were just the same kind of animal. “There is knowledge and knowledge,” said John Bunyan. There are Yankees and Yankees. Do you know two native trees called pitch pine and white pine respectively? Of course you know ’em. Well, there are pitch-pine Yankees, and white-pine Yankees. We don’t talk about the inherited differences of men quite as freely, perhaps, as they do in the Old World, but republicanism doesn’t alter the laws of physiology. We have a native aristocracy, a superior race, just as plainly marked by nature as of a higher and finer grade than the common run of people as the white pine is marked in its form, its stature, its bark, its delicate foliage, as belonging to the nobility of the forest; and the pitch pine stubbed, rough, coarse-haired, as of the plebeian order. Only the strange thing is to see in what a capricious way our natural nobility is distributed. The last born nobleman I saw was only this morning; he was pulling a rope that was fastened to a Maine schooner loaded with lumber. I should say he was about twenty years old, as fine a figure of a young man as you would ask to see, and with a regular Greek outline of countenance, waving hair, that fell as if a sculptor had massed it to copy, and a complexion as rich as a red sunset. I have a notion that the State of Maine breeds the natural nobility in a larger portion than some other States, but they spring up in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. The young fellow I saw this morning had on an old flannel shirt and a pair of pantaloons that meant hard work, and a cheap cloth cap pushed back on his head so as to let the large waves of hair straggle out over his forehead; he was tugging at his rope with the other sailors, but upon my word I don’t think I have seen a young English nobleman of all those whom I have looked upon that answered to the notion of ‘blood’ so well as this young fellow did. I suppose if I made such a levelling confession as this in public, people would think I was looking towards being the labour-reform candidate for President. But I should go on and spoil my prospects by saying that I don’t think the white-pine Yankee is the more generally prevailing growth, but rather the pitch-pine Yankee.’

The Member of the House seemed to have been getting a dim idea that all this was not exactly flattering to the huckle-berry districts. His features betrayed the growth of this suspicion so clearly that the Master replied to his look as if it had been a remark. (I need hardly say that this particular member of the General Court was a pitch-pine Yankee of the most thoroughly characterized aspect and flavour.)

'Yes, sir,' the Master continued—sir being anybody that listened—'there is neither flattery nor offence in the views which a physiological observer takes of the forms of life around him. It won't do to draw individual portraits, but the differences of natural groups of human beings are as proper subjects of remark as those of different breeds of horses, and if horses were Houyhnhnms I don't think they would quarrel with us because we made a distinction between a "Morgan" and a "Messenger." The truth is, sir, the lean sandy soil and the droughts and the long winters and the east winds and the cold storms, and all sorts of unknown local influences that we can't make out quite so plainly as these, have a tendency to roughen the human organization and make it coarse, something as it is with the tree I mentioned. Some spots and some strains of blood fight against these influences, but if I should say right out what I think, it would be that the finest human fruit, on the whole, and especially the finest women that we get in New England, are raised under glass.'

'Good gracious !' exclaimed the Landlady, 'under glass !'

'Give me cucumbers raised in the open air,' said the Capitalist, who was a little hard of hearing.

'Perhaps,' I remarked, 'it might be as well if you would explain this last expression of yours. Raising human beings under glass I take to be a metaphorical rather than a literal statement of your meaning.'

'No, sir !' replied the Master, with energy, 'I mean just what I say, sir. Under glass, and with a south exposure. During the hard season, of course—for in the heats of summer the tenderest hot-house plants are not afraid of the open air. *Protection* is what the transplanted Aryan requires in this New England climate. Keep him, and especially keep *her*, in a wide street of a well-built city eight months of the year ; good solid brick walls behind her, good sheets of plate glass, with the sun shining warm through them, in front of her, and you have put her in the condition of the pine-apple, from the land of which, and not from that of the other kind of pine, her race started on its travels. People don't know what a gain there is to health by living in cities, the best parts of them, of course, for we know too well what the worst parts are. In the first place you get rid of the noxious emanations which poison so many country localities with typhoid fever and dysentery ; not wholly rid of them,

of course, but to a surprising degree. Let me tell you a doctor's story. I was visiting a Western city a good many years ago ; it was in the autumn, the time when all sorts of malarious diseases are about. The doctor I was speaking of took me to see the cemetery just outside the town—I don't know how much he had done to fill it, for he didn't tell me, but I'll tell you what he did say.'

' "Look round," said the doctor. 'There isn't a house in all the ten-mile circuit of country you can see over, where there isn't one person, at least, shaking with fever and ague. And yet you needn't be afraid of carrying it away with you, for as long as your home is on a paved street you are safe."

'I think it likely,' the Master went on to say, 'that my friend the doctor put it pretty strongly, but there is no doubt at all that while all the country round was suffering from intermittent fever the paved part of the city was comparatively exempted. What do you do when you build a house on a damp soil?—and there are damp soils pretty much everywhere. Why you floor the cellar with cement, don't you? Well, the soil of a city is cemented all over, one may say, with certain qualifications of course. A first-rate city house is a regular *sanatorium*. The only trouble is, that the little good-for-nothings that come of utterly used-up and worn-out stock, and ought to die, can't die, to save their lives. So they grow up to dilute the vigour of the race with skim-milk vitality. They would have died, like good children, in most average country places ; but eight months of shelter in a regulated temperature, in a well-sunned house, in a duly moistened air, with good sidewalks to go about on in all weather, and four months of the cream of summer and the fresh milk of Jersey cows, make the little sham organizations—the worm-eaten wind-falls, for that's what they look like—hang on to the boughs of life like "frozen-thaws ;" regular struld-bugs they come to be, a good many of 'em.'

The Scarabee's ear was caught by that queer word of Swift's, and he asked very innocently what kind of bugs he was speaking of, whereupon That Boy shouted out, 'Straddlebugs !' to his own immense amusement and the great bewilderment of the Scarabee, who only saw that there was one of those unintelligible breaks in the conversation which made other people laugh, and drew back his antennæ as usual, perplexed, but not amused.

I do not believe the Master had said all he was going to say on this subject, and of course all these statements of his are more or less one-sided. But that some invalids do much better in cities than in the country is indisputable, and that the frightful dysenteries and fevers which have raged like pestilences in many of our country towns are almost unknown in the better built sections of some of our large cities is getting to be more generally understood since our well-to-do people have annually emi-



grated in such numbers from the cemented surface of the city to the steaming soil of some of the dangerous rural districts. If one should contrast the healthiest country residences with the worst city ones the result would be all the other way, of course, so that there are two sides to the question, which we must let the doctors pound in their great mortar, infuse and strain, hoping that they will present us with the clear solution when they have got through these processes. One of our chief wants is a complete sanitary map of every State in the Union.

The balance of our table, as the reader has no doubt observed, has been deranged by the withdrawal of the Man of Letters, so called, and only the side of the deficiency changed by the removal of the Young Astronomer into our neighbourhood. The fact that there was a vacant chair on the side opposite us had by no means escaped the notice of That Boy. He had taken advantage of his opportunity and invited in a schoolmate whom he evidently looked upon as a great personage. This boy or youth was a good deal older than himself, and stood to him apparently in the light of a patron and instructor in the ways of life. A very jaunty, knowing young gentleman he was, good-looking, smartly dressed, smooth-cheeked as yet, curly-haired, with a roguish eye, a sagacious wink, a ready tongue, as I soon found out ; and as I learned could catch a ball on the fly with any boy of his age ; not quarrelsome, but, if he had to strike, hit from the shoulder ; the pride of his father (who was a man of property and a civic dignitary), and answering to the name of Johnny.

I was a little surprised at the liberty That Boy had taken in introducing an extra peptic element at our table, reflecting as I did that a certain number of avoirdupois ounces of nutriment which the visitor would dispose of corresponded to a very appreciable pecuniary amount, so that he was levying a contribution upon our Landlady which she might be inclined to complain of. For the *Caput mortuum* (or dead-head, in vulgar phrase) is apt to be furnished with a *Venter vivus*, or, as we may say, a lively appetite. But the Landlady welcomed the new-comer very heartily.

'Why! *how—do—you—do—Johnny?*' with the notes of interrogation and of admiration both together, as here represented.

Johnny signified that he was doing about as well as could be expected under the circumstances, having just had a little difference with a young person whom he spoke of as 'Pewter-jaw' (I suppose he had worn a dentist's tooth-straightening contrivance during his second dentition), which youth he had finished off, as he said, in good shape, but at the expense of a slight—epistaxis, we will translate his vernacular expression.

The three ladies all looked sympathetic, but there did not

seem to be any great occasion for it, as the boy had come all right, and seemed to be in the best of spirits.

'And how is your father and your mother?' asked the Landlady.

'Oh, the Governor and the Head Centre? A 1, both of 'em. Prime order for shipping—warranted to stand any climate. The Governor says he weighs a hundred and seventy-five pounds. Got a chin-tuft just like Ed'in Forest. D'd y' ever see Ed'in Forest play *Metamora*? Bully, I tell *you*! My old gentleman means to be Mayor or Governor or President or something or other before he goes off the handle, you'd better b'lieve. *He's* smart—and I've heard folks say I take after him.'

Somehow or other I felt as if I had seen this boy before, or known something about him. Where did he get those expressions, 'A 1' and 'prime' and so on? They must have come from somebody who has been in the retail dry-goods business, or something of that nature. I have certain vague reminiscences that carry me back to the early times of this boarding-house. 'Johnny.' Landlady knows his father well. Boarded with her, no doubt. There was somebody by the name of John, I remember perfectly well, lived with her. I remember both my friends mentioned him, one of them very often. I wonder if this boy isn't a son of his! I asked the Landlady after breakfast whether this was not, as I had suspected, the son of that former boarder.

'To be sure he is,' she answered, 'and jest such a good-natur'd sort of creatur' as his father was. I always liked John, as we used to call his father. He did love fun, but he was a good soul, and stood by me when I was in trouble, always. He went into business on his own account after a while, and got merried, and settled down into a family man. They tell me he is an amazing smart business man—grown wealthy, and his wife's father left her money. But I can't help calling him John—law, we never thought of calling him anything else, and he always laughs and says, "That's right." This is his oldest son, and everybody calls him Johnny. That Boy of ours goes to the same school with his boy, and thinks there never was anybody like him—you see there was a boy undertook to impose on our boy, and Johnny gave the other boy a good licking, and ever since that he is always wanting to have Johnny round with him and bring him here with him—and when those two boys get together, there never was boys that was so chock-full of fun and sometimes mischief, but not very bad mischief, as those two boys be. But I like to have him come once in a while when there is room at the table, as there is now, for it puts me in mind of the old times, when my old boarders was all round me, that I used to think so much of—not that my boarders that I have now ain't very nice people, but I did think a dreadful sight of the gentleman that made that first book; it helped me on in the world more than

ever he knew of—for it was as good as one of them Brandreth's pills-advertisements, and didn't cost me a cent. And that young lady he merried too, she was nothing but a poor young school-ma'am when she come to my house, and now—and she deserved it all too, for she was always just the same, rich or poor, and she isn't a bit prouder now she wears a camel's-hair shawl than she was when I used to lend her a woollen one to keep her poor dear little shoulders warm when she had to go out and it was storming. And then there was that old gentleman—I can't speak about him, for I never knew how good he was till his will was opened, and then it was too late to thank him. . . .'

I respected the feeling which caused the interval of silence, and found my own eyes moistened as I remembered how long it was since that friend of ours was sitting in the chair where I now sit, and what a tidal-wave of change has swept over the world and more especially over this great land of ours, since he opened his lips and found so many kind listeners.

The Young Astronomer has read us another extract from his manuscript. I ran my eye over it, and so far as I have noticed it is correct enough in its versification. I suppose we are getting gradually over our hemispherical provincialism, which allowed a set of monks to pull their hoods over our eyes and tell us there was no meaning in any religious symbolism but our own. If I am mistaken about this advance I am very glad to print the young man's somewhat outspoken lines to help us in that direction.

## WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

### VI.

The time is racked with birth-pangs ; ever hour  
Brings forth some gasping truth, and truth new-born  
Looks a misshapen and untimely growth,  
The terror of the household and its shame,  
A monster coiling in its nurse's lap  
That some would strangle, some would only starve ;  
But still it breathes, and passed from hand to hand,  
And suckled at a hundred half-clad breasts,  
Comes slowly to its stature and its form,  
Calms the rough ridges of its dragon-scales,  
Changes to shining locks its snaky hair,  
And moves transfigured into angel guise,  
Welcomed by all that cursed its hour of birth,  
And folded in the same encircling arms  
That cast it like a serpent from their hold !

If thou wouldst live in honour, die in peace,  
Have the fine words the marble-workers learn  
To carve so well, upon thy funeral-stone,  
And earn a fair obituary, dressed

In all the many-coloured robes of praise,  
 Be deafer than the adder to the cry  
 Of that same foundling truth, until it grows  
 To seemly favour, and at length has won  
 The smiles of hard-mouthed men and light-lipped dames ;  
 Then snatch it from its meagre nurse's breast,  
 Fold it in silk and give it food from gold ;  
 So shalt thou share its glory when at last  
 It drops its mortal vesture, and revealed  
 In all the splendour of its heavenly form,  
 Spreads on the startled air its mighty wings !

Alas ! how much that seemed immortal truth  
 That heroes fought for, martyrs died to save,  
 Reveals its earth-born lineage, growing old  
 And limping in its march, its wings unplumed,  
 Its heavenly semblance faded like a dream !

Here in this painted casket, just unsealed,  
 Lies what was once a breathing shape like thine,  
 Once loved as thou art loved ; there beamed the eyes  
 That looked on Memphis in its hour of pride,  
 That saw the walls of hundred-gated Thebes,  
 And all the mirrored glories of the Nile.  
 See how they toiled that all-consuming time  
 Might leave the frame immortal in its tomb ;  
 Filled it with fragrant balms and odorous gums  
 That still diffuse their sweetness through the air,  
 And wound and wound with patient fold on fold  
 The flaxen bands thy hand has rudely torn !  
 Perchance thou yet canst see the faded stain  
 Of the sad mourner's tear.

But what is this ?  
 The sacred beetle, bound upon the breast  
 Of the blind heathen ! Snatch the curious prize,  
 Give it a place among thy treasured spoils,  
 Fossil and relic—corals, encrinites,  
 The fly in amber and the fish in stone,  
 The twisted circlet of Etruscan gold,  
 Medal, intaglio, poniard poison-ring—  
 Place for the Memphian beetle with thine hoard !

Ah ! longer than thy creed has blest the world,  
 This toy, thus ravished from thy brother's breast,  
 Was to the heart of Mizraim as divine,  
 As holy, as the symbol that we lay  
 On the still bosom of our white-robed dead,  
 And raise above their dust that all may know  
 Here sleeps an heir of glory. Loving friends,  
 With tears of trembling faith and choking sobs,  
 And prayers to those who judge of mortal deeds,  
 Wrapped this poor image in the cerement's fold  
 That Isis and Osiris, friends of man,  
 Might know their own and claim the ransomed soul.

An idol ? Man was born to worship such !  
 An idol is an image of his thought ;

Sometimes he carves it out of gleaming stone,  
 And sometimes moulds it out of glittering gold,  
 Or rounds it in a mighty frescoed dome,  
 Or lifts it heavenward in a lofty spire,  
 Or shapes it in a cunning frame of words,  
 Or pays his priest to make it day by day ;  
 For sense must have its god as well as soul ;  
 A new-born Dian calls for silver shrines,  
 And Egypt's holiest symbol is our own,  
 The sign we worship as did they of old  
 When Isis and Osiris ruled the world.

Let us be true to our most subtle selves,  
 We long to have our idols like the rest.  
 Think ! when the men of Israel had their God  
 Encamped among them, talking with their chief,  
 Leading them in the pillar of the cloud  
 And watching o'er them in the shaft of fire,  
 They still must have an image ; still they longed  
 For somewhat of substantial, solid form  
 Whereon to hang their garlands, and to fix  
 Their wandering thoughts, and gain a stronger hold  
 For their uncertain faith, not yet assured  
 If those same meteors of the day and night  
 Were not mere exhalations of the soil.

Are we less earthly than the chosen race ?  
 Are we more neighbours of the living God  
 Than they who gathered manna every morn,  
 Reaping where none had sown, and heard the voice  
 Of him who met the Highest in the mount,  
 And brought them tables, graven with His hand ?  
 Yet these must have their idol, brought their gold,  
 That star-browed Apis might be god again ;  
 Yea, from their ears the women brake the rings  
 That lent such spendours to the gipsy brown  
 Of sunburnt cheeks—what more could woman do  
 To show her pious zeal ? They went astray,  
 But nature led them as it leads us all !

We too, who mock at Israel's golden calf  
 And scoff at Egypt's sacred scarabee,  
 Would have our amulets to clasp and kiss,  
 And flood with rapturous tears, and bear with us  
 To be our dear companions in the dust,  
 Such magic works an image in our souls !

Man is an embryo ; see at twenty years  
 His bones, the columns that uphold his frame  
 Not yet cemented, shaft and capital,  
 Mere fragments of the temple incomplete.  
 At twoscore, threescore, is he then full grown ?  
 Nay, still a child, and as the little maids  
 Dress and undress their puppets, so he tries  
 To dress a lifeless creed, as if it lived,  
 And change its raiment when the world cries shame.

We smile to see our little ones at play  
 So grave, so thoughtful, with maternal care

Nursing the wisps of rags they call their babes ;  
 Does He not smile who sees us with the toys  
 We call by sacred names, and idly feign  
 To be what we have called them ? He is still  
 The Father of this helpless nursery-brood,  
 Whose second childhood joins so close its first,  
 That in the crowding, hurrying years between  
 We scarce have trained our senses to their task  
 Before the gathering mist has dimmed our eyes,  
 And with our hollowed palm we help our ear,  
 And trace with trembling hand our wrinkled names,  
 And then begin to tell our stories o'er,  
 And see—not hear—the whispering lips that say,  
 ' You know —— ? Your father knew him. This is he,  
 Tottering and leaning on the hireling's arm.  
 And so, at length, disrobed of all that clad  
 The simple life we share with weed and worm,  
 Go to our cradles, naked as we came.

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 XI.

I SUPPOSE there would have been even more remarks upon the growing intimacy of the Young Astronomer and his pupil, if the curiosity of the boarders had not in the meantime been so much excited at the apparently close relation which had sprung up between the Registrar of Deeds and the Lady. It was really hard to tell what to make of it. The Registrar appeared at the table in a new coat. Suspicious. The Lady was evidently deeply interested in him, if we could judge by the frequency and the length of their interviews. On at least one occasion he has brought a lawyer with him, which naturally suggested the idea that there were some property arrangements to be attended to, in case, as seems probable against all reasons to the contrary, these two estimable persons, so utterly unfitted, as one would say, to each other, contemplated an alliance. It is no pleasure to me to record an arrangement of this kind. I frankly confess I do not know what to make of it. With her tastes and breeding, it is the last thing that I should have thought of—her uniting herself with this most commonplace and mechanical person, who cannot even offer her the elegances and luxuries to which she might seem entitled on changing her condition.

While I was thus interested and puzzled, I received an unexpected visit from our Landlady. She was evidently excited, and by some event which was of a happy nature, for her countenance was beaming, and she seemed impatient to communicate what she had to tell. Impatient or not, she must

wait a moment, while I say a word about her. Our Landlady is as good a creature as ever lived. She is a little negligent of grammar at times, and will get a wrong word now and then; she is garrulous, circumstantial, associates facts by their accidental cohesion rather than by their vital affinities, is given to choking and tears on slight occasions, but she has a warm heart, and feels to her boarders as if they were her blood-relations.

She began her conversation abruptly. 'I expect I'm a-going to lose one of my boarders,' she said.

'You don't seem very unhappy about it, madam,' I answered. 'We all took it easily when the person who sat on our side of the table quitted us in such a hurry, but I do not think there is anybody left that either you or the boarders want to get rid of—unless it is myself,' I added modestly.

'You!' said the Landlady—'you! No indeed. When I have a quiet boarder that's a small eater, I don't want to lose him. You don't make trouble, you don't find fault with your vit——' (Dr. Benjamin had schooled his parent on this point, and she altered the word) 'with your food, and you know when you've had enough.'

I really felt proud of this eulogy, which embraces the most desirable excellences of a human being in the capacity of boarder.

The Landlady began again. 'I'm going to lose—at least, I suppose I shall—one of the best boarders I ever had—that Lady that's been with me so long.'

'I thought there was something going on between her and the Registrar,' I said.

'Something! I should think there was! About three months ago he began making her acquaintance. I thought there was something particular. I didn't quite like to watch 'em very close, but I couldn't help overhearing some of the things he said to her, for, you see, he used to follow her up into the parlour—they talked pretty low, but I could catch a word now and then. I heard him say something to her one day about "bettering her condition," and she seemed to be thinking very hard about it, and turning of it over in her mind; and I said to myself, "She doesn't want to take up with him, but she feels dreadfully poor, and perhaps he has been saving and has got money in the bank, and she doesn't want to throw away a chance of bettering herself without thinking it over. But dear me," says I to myself, "to think of her walking up the broad aisle into meeting alongside of such a homely, rusty-looking creatur' as that! But there's no telling what folks will do when poverty has got hold of 'em."

'Well, so I thought she was waiting to make up her mind, and he was hanging on in hopes she'd come round at last, as



women do half the time, for they don't know their own minds and the wind blows both ways at once with 'em as the smoke blows out of the tall chimnies—east out of this one and west out of that—so it's no use looking at 'em to know what the weather is.

' But yesterday she comes up to me after breakfast, and asks me to go up with her into her little room. "Now," says I to myself, "I shall hear all about it." I saw she looked as if she'd got some of her trouble off her mind, and I guessed that it was settled, "and so," says I to myself, "I must wish her joy, and hope it's all for the best, whatever I think about it."

' Well, she asked me to sit down, and then she began. She said that she was expecting to have a change in her condition of life, and had asked me up so that I might have the first news of it. "I am sure," says I, "I wish you both joy. Merriage is a blessed thing when folks is well sorted, and it is an honourable thing, and the first meracle was at the merriage in Canaan. It brings a great sight of happiness with it, as I've had a chance of knowing, for my—hus——"

The Landlady showed her usual tendency to 'break' from the conversational pace just at this point, but managed to rein in the rebellious diaphragm, and resumed her narrative.

"Merriage?" says she: "pray who has said anything about merriage?"

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," says I, "I thought you had spoke of changing your condition, and I——" She looked as I stopped right short.

"Don't say another word," says she, "but jest listen to what I am going to tell you.

"My friend," says she, "that you have seen with me so often lately, was hunting among his old Record books, when all at once he come across an old deed that was made by somebody that had my family name. He took it into his head to read it over, and he found there was some kind of a condition—that if it wasn't kept the property would all go back to them that was the heirs of the one that gave the deed, and that he found out was me. Something or other put it into his head," says she, "that the company that owned the property—it was ever so rich a company, and owned land all round everywhere—hadn't kept to the conditions. So he went to work," says she, "and hunted through his books, and he inquired all round, and he found out pretty much all about it, and at last he come to me"—it's my boarder, you know, that says all this—"and says he, 'Ma'am,' says he, 'if you have any kind of fancy for being a rich woman you've only got to say so.' I didn't know what he meant, and I began to think," says she, "he must be crazy. But he explained it all to me, how I'd nothing to do but go to court and I could get a sight of property back." Well, so she went on telling me—

there was ever so much more that I suppose was all plain enough, but I don't remember it all—only I know my boarder was a good deal worried at first at the thought of taking money that other people thought was theirs, and the Registrar he had to talk to her, and he brought a lawyer and *he* talked to her, and her friends *they* talked to her, and the upshot of it all was that the company agreed to settle the business by paying her—well, I don't know just how much, but enough to make her one of the rich folks again.'

I may as well add here that, as I have since learned, this is one of the most important cases of releasing right of re-entry for condition broken which has been settled by arbitration for a considerable period. If I am not mistaken the Registrar of Deeds will get something more than a new coat out of this business, for the Lady very justly attributes her change of fortunes to his sagacity and his activity in following up the hint he had come across by mere accident.

So my supernumerary fellow-boarder, whom I would have dispensed with as a cumberer of the table, has proved a ministering angel to one of the personages whom I most cared for.

One would have thought that the most scrupulous person need not have hesitated in asserting an unquestioned legal and equitable claim simply because it had lain a certain number of years in abeyance. But before the Lady could make up her mind to accept her good fortune, she had been kept awake many nights in doubt and inward debate whether she should avail herself of her rights. If it had been private property, so that another person must be made poor that she should become rich, she would have lived and died in want rather than claim her own. I do not think any of us would like to turn out the possessor of a fine estate enjoyed for two or three generations on the faith of unquestioned ownership by making use of some old forgotten instrument, which accident had thrown in our way.

But it was all nonsense to indulge in any sentiment in a case like this, where it was not only a right, but a duty which she owed herself and others in relation with her, to accept what Providence, as it appeared, had thrust upon her, and when no suffering would be occasioned to anybody. Common sense told her not to refuse it. So did several of her rich friends, who remembered about this time that they had not called upon her for a good while, and among them Mrs. Midas Goldenrod.

Never had that lady's carriage stood before the door of our boarding-house so long, never had it stopped so often, as since the revelation which had come from the Registry of Deeds.

Mrs. Midas Goldenrod was not a bad woman, but she loved and hated in too exclusive and fastidious a way to allow us to consider her as representing the highest ideal of womanhood. She hated narrow, ill-ventilated courts, where there was nothing to see, if one looked out of window, but old men in dressing-gowns and old women in caps ; she hated little dark rooms with airtight stoves in them ; she hated rusty bombazine gowns and last year's bonnets ; she hated gloves that were not as fresh as new-laid eggs, and shoes that had grown bulgy and wrinkled in service ; she hated common crockery-ware and teaspoons of slight constitution ; she hated second appearances on the dinner-table ; she hated coarse napkins and table-cloths ; she hated to ride in the horse-cars ; she hated to walk except for short distances, when she was tired of sitting in her carriage. She loved with sincere and undisguised affection a spacious city mansion and a charming country villa, with a seaside cottage for a couple of months or so ; she loved a perfectly appointed household, a cook who was up to all kinds of *salmis* and *vol-au-vents*, a French maid, and a stylish-looking coachman, and the rest of the people necessary to help one live in a decent manner ; she loved pictures that other people said were first-rate, and which had at least cost first-rate prices ; she loved books with handsome backs, in showy cases ; she loved heavy and richly-wrought plate ; fine linen and plenty of it ; dresses from Paris frequently, and as many as could be got in without troubling the custom-house ; Russian sables and Venetian point-lace ; diamonds, and good big ones ; and speaking generally, she loved dear things in distinction from cheap ones, the real article and not the economical substitute.

For the life of me I cannot see anything Satanic in all this. Tell me, Beloved, only between ourselves, if some of these things are not desirable enough in their way, and if you and I could not make up our minds to put up with some of the least objectionable of them without any great inward struggle ? Even in the matter of ornaments there is something to be said. Why should we be told that the New Jerusalem is paved with gold, and that its twelve gates are each of them a pearl, and that its foundations are garnished with sapphires and emeralds and all manner of precious stones, if these are not among the most desirable of objects ? And is there anything very strange in the fact that many a daughter of earth finds it a sweet foretaste of heaven to wear about her frail earthly tabernacle these glittering reminders of the celestial city ?

Mrs. Midas Goldenrod was not so entirely peculiar and anomalous in her likes and dislikes ; the only trouble was that she mixed up these accidents of life too much with life itself, which is so often serenely or actively noble and happy without reference to them. She valued persons chiefly according to

their external conditions, and of course the very moment her relative, the Lady of our breakfast-table, began to find herself in a streak of sunshine she came forward with a lighted candle to show her which way her path lay before her.

The Lady saw all this, how plainly, how painfully ! yet she exercised a true charity for the weakness of her relative. Sensible people have as much consideration for the frailties of the rich as for those of the poor. There is a good deal of excuse for them. Even you and I, philosophers and philanthropists as we may think ourselves, have a dislike for the enforced economies, proper and honourable though they certainly are, of those who are two or three degrees below us in the scale of agreeable living.

‘These are very worthy persons you have been living with, my dear,’ said Mrs. Midas (the ‘My dear’ was an expression which had flowered out more luxuriantly than ever before in the new streak of sunshine)—‘eminently respectable parties, I have no question, but then we shall want you to move as soon as possible to our quarter of the town, where we can see more of you than we have been able to do in this queer place.’

It was not very pleasant to listen to this kind of talk, but the Lady remembered her annual bouquet, and her occasional visits from the rich lady, and restrained the inclination to remind her of the humble sphere from which she herself, the rich and patronising personage, had worked her way up (if it was up) into that world which she seemed to think was the only one where a human being could find life worth having. Her cheek flushed a little, however, as she said to Mrs. Midas that she felt attached to the place where she had been living so long. She doubted, she was pleased to say, whether she should find better company in any circle she was like to move in than she left behind her at our boarding-house. I give the Old Master the credit of this compliment. If one does not agree with half of what he says, at any rate he always has something to say, and entertains and lets out opinions and whims and notions of one kind and another that one can quarrel with if he is out of humour, or carry away to think about if he happens to be in the receptive mood.

But the Lady expressed still more strongly the regret she should feel at leaving her young friend, our Scheherazade. I cannot wonder at this. The Young Girl has lost what little playfulness she had in the earlier months of my acquaintance with her. I often read her stories partly from my interest in her, and partly because I find merit enough in them to deserve something better than the rough handling they got from her coarse-fibred critic, whoever he was. I see evidence that her thoughts are wandering from her task, that she has fits of melancholy, and bursts of tremulous excitement, and that she

has as much as she can do to keep herself at all to her stated, inevitable, and sometimes almost despairing literary labour. I have had some acquaintance with vital phenomena of this kind, and know something of the nervous nature of young women and its 'magnetic storms,' if I may borrow an expression from the physicists, to indicate the perturbations to which they are liable. She is more in need of friendship and counsel now than ever before, it seems to me, and I cannot bear to think that the Lady, who has become like a mother to her, is to leave her to her own guidance.

It is plain enough what is at the bottom of this disturbance. The astronomical lessons she has been taking have become interesting enough to absorb too much of her thoughts, and she finds them wandering to the stars or elsewhere, when they should be working quietly in the editor's harness.

The Landlady has her own views on this matter which she communicated to me something as follows :

'I don't quite like to tell folks what a lucky place my boarding-house is, for fear I should have all sorts of people crowding in to be my boarders for the sake of their chances. Folks come here poor and they go away rich. Young women come here without a friend in the world, and the next thing that happens is a gentleman steps up to 'em and says, "If you'll take me for your pardner for life, I'll give you a good home and love you ever so much besides ;" and off goes my young lady-boarder into a fine three-story house, as grand as the governor's wife, with everything to make her comfortable, and a husband to care for her into the bargain. That's the way it is with the young ladies that comes to board with me, ever since the gentleman that wrote the first book that advertised my establishment (and never charged me a cent for it neither) married the School-ma'am. And I think—but that's between you and me—that it's going to be the same thing right over again between that young gentleman and this young girl here—if she doesn't kill herself with writing for them newspapers. It's too bad they don't pay her more for writing her stories, for I read one of 'em that made me cry so the Doctor—my Doctor Benjamin—said, "Ma, what makes your eyes look so?" and wanted to rig a machine up and look at 'm ; but I told him what the matter was, and that he needn't fix up his peeking contrivances on my account. Anyhow she's a nice young woman as ever lived, and as industrious with that pen of hers as if she was at work with a sewing-machine—and there ain't much difference, for that matter, between sewing on shirts and writing on stories—one way you work with your foot, and the other way you work with your fingers ; but I rather guess there's more headache in the stories than there is in the stitches, because you don't have to think quite so hard while your foot's going as you do when your

fingers is at work, scratch, scratch, scratch, scribble, scribble, scribble.'

It occurred to me that this last suggestion of the Landlady was worth considering by the soft-handed, broadcloth-clad spouters to the labouring classes—so called in distinction from the idle people who only contrive the machinery and discover the processes and lay out the work and draw the charts and organise the various movements which keep the world going and make it tolerable. The organ-blower works harder with his muscles, for that matter, than the organ-player, and may perhaps be exasperated into thinking himself a downtrodden martyr because he does not receive the same pay for his services.

I will not pretend that it needed the Landlady's sagacious guess about the Young Astronomer and his pupil to open my eyes to certain possibilities, if not probabilities, in that direction. Our Scheherazade kept on writing her stories according to agreement, so many pages for so many dollars, but some of her readers began to complain that they could not always follow her quite so well as in her earlier efforts. It seemed as if she must have fits of absence. In one instance, her heroine began as a blonde and finished as a brunette; not in consequence of the use of any cosmetic, but through simple inadvertence. At last it happened in one of her stories that a prominent character who had been killed in an early page, not equivocally, but mortally, definitively killed, done for, and disposed of, re-appeared, as if nothing had happened, towards the close of her narrative. Her mind was on something else, and she had got two stories mixed up and sent her manuscript without having looked it over. She told this mishap to the Lady, as something she was dreadfully ashamed of and could not possibly account for. It had cost her a sharp note from the publisher, and would be as good as a dinner to some half-starved Bohemian of the critical press.

The Lady listened to all this very thoughtfully, looking at her with great tenderness, and said, 'My poor child!' Not another word then, but her silence meant a good deal.

When a *man* holds his tongue it does not signify much. But when a *woman* dispenses with the office of that mighty member, when she sheathes her natural weapon at a trying moment, it means that she trusts to still more formidable enginery; to tears it may be, a solvent more powerful than that with which Hannibal softened the Alpine rocks; or to the heaving bosom, the sight of which has subdued so many stout natures; or, it may be, to a sympathising, quieting look which says 'Peace, be still!' to the winds and waves of the little inland ocean, in a language that means more than speech.

While these matters were going on the Master and I had

many talks on many subjects. He had found me a pretty good listener, for I had learned that the best way of getting at what was worth having from him was to wind him up with a question and let him run down all of himself. It is easy to turn a good talker into an insufferable bore by contradicting him, and putting questions for him to stumble over—that is if he is not a bore already, as ‘good talkers’ are apt to be, except now and then.

We had been discussing some knotty points one morning when he said all at once :

‘Come into my library with me. I want to read you some new passages from an interleaved copy of my book. You haven’t read the printed part yet. I gave you a copy of it, but nobody reads a book that is given to him. Of course not. Nobody but a fool expects him to. He reads a little in it here and there, perhaps, and he cuts all the leaves if he cares enough about the writer, who will be sure to call on him some day, and if he is left alone in his library for five minutes will have hunted every corner of it until he has found the book he sent—if it is to be found at all, which doesn’t always happen, if there’s a penal colony anywhere in a garret or closet for typographical offenders and vagrants.’

‘What do you do when you receive a book you don’t want, from the author?’ said I.

‘Give him a good-natured adjective or two if I can, and thank him, and tell him I am lying under a sense of obligation to him.’

‘That is as good an excuse for lying as almost any,’ I said.

‘Yes, but look out for the fellows that send you a copy of their book to trap you into writing a bookseller’s advertisement for it. I got caught so once, and never heard the end of it, and never shall hear it.’ He took down an elegantly bound volume, on opening which appeared a flourishing and eminently flattering dedication to himself. ‘There,’ said he, ‘what could I do less than acknowledge such a compliment in polite terms, and hope and expect the book would prove successful, and so forth and so forth? Well, I get a letter every few months from some new locality where the man that made that book is covering the fences with his placards, asking me whether I wrote that letter which he keeps in stereotype and has kept so any time these dozen or fifteen years. *Animus tuus oculus*, as the freshmen used to say. If her Majesty, the Queen of England, sends you a copy of her “Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands,” be sure you mark your letter of thanks for it *Private!*’

We had got comfortably seated in his library in the meantime, and the Master had taken up his book. I noticed that every other page was left blank, and that he had written in a good deal of new matter.

‘I tell you what,’ he said, ‘there’s so much intelligence about nowadays in books and newspapers and talk that it’s mighty



hard to write without getting something or other worth listening to into your essay or your volume. The foolishest book is a kind of leaky boat on the sea of wisdom ; some of the wisdom will get in anyhow. Every now and then I find something in my book that seems so good to me, I can't help thinking it must have leaked in. I suppose other people discover that it came through a leak, full as soon as I do. You must write a book or two to find out how much and how little you know and have to say. Then you must read some notices of it by somebody that loves you and one or two by somebody that hates you. You'll find yourself a very odd piece of property after you've been through these experiences. They're trying to the constitution ; I'm always glad to hear that a friend is as well as can be expected after he's had a book.

'You mustn't think there are no better things in these pages of mine than the ones I'm going to read you, but you may come across something here that I forgot to say when we were talking over these matters.'

He began, reading from the manuscript portion of his book :

"We find it hard to get and to keep any private property in thought. Other people are all the time saying the same things we are hoarding to say when we get ready." (He looked up from his book just here and said, 'Don't be afraid, I am not going to quote *Pereant*'). "One of our old boarders—the one that called himself 'The Professor,' I think it was—said some pretty audacious things about what he called 'pathological piety,' as I remember, in one of his papers. And here comes along Mr. Galton, and shows in detail from religious biographies that 'there is a frequent correlation between an unusually devout disposition and a weak constitution.' Neither of them appeared to know that John Bunyan had got at the same fact long before them. He tells us, 'The more healthy the lusty man is, the more prone he is unto evil.' If the converse is true, no wonder that good people, according to Bunyan, are always in trouble and terror, for he says,

" 'A Christian man is never long at ease ;  
When one fright's gone, another doth him seize.'

If invalidism and the nervous timidity which is apt to go with it are elements of spiritual superiority, it follows that pathology and toxicology should form a most important part of a theological education, so that a divine might know how to keep a parish in a state of chronic bad health in order that it might be virtuous.

"It is a great mistake to think that a man's religion is going to rid him of his natural qualities. 'Bishop Hall' (as you may remember to have seen quoted elsewhere) 'prefers Nature before Grace in the Election of a wife, because, saith he, it will

be a hard Task, where the Nature is peevish and froward, for Grace to make an entire conquest while Life lasteth.'

"'Nature' and 'Grace' have been contrasted with each other in a way not very respectful to the Divine omnipotence. Kings and queens reign 'by the Grace of God,' but a sweet, docile, pious disposition, such as is born in some children and grows up with them—that congenital gift which good Bishop Hall would look for in a wife—is attributed to 'Nature.' In fact 'Nature' and 'Grace,' as handled by the scholastics, are nothing more nor less than two hostile Divinities in the Pantheon of post-classical polytheism.

"What is the secret of the profound interest which 'Darwinism' has excited in the minds and hearts of more persons than dare to confess their doubts and hopes? It is because it restores 'Nature' to its place as a true divine manifestation. It is that it removes the traditional curse from that helpless infant lying in its mother's arms. It is that it lifts from the shoulders of man the responsibility for the fact of death. It is that if it is true, woman can no longer be taunted with having brought down on herself the pangs which make her sex a martyrdom. If development upward is the general law of the race; if we have grown by natural evolution out of the cave-man, and even less human forms of life, we have everything to hope from the future. That the question can be discussed without offence shows that we are entering on a new era, a Revival greater than that of Letters, the Revival of Humanity.

"The prevalent view of 'Nature' has been akin to that which long reigned with reference to disease. This used to be considered as a distinct entity apart from the processes of life, of which it is one of the manifestations. It was a kind of demon to be attacked with things of evil taste and smell; to be fumigated out of the system as the evil spirit was driven from the bridal-chamber in the story of Tobit. The Doctor of earlier days, even as I can remember him, used to exorcise the demon of disease with recipes of odour as potent as that of the angel's diabolifuge—the smoke from a fish's heart and liver, duly burned—'the which smell when the evil spirit had smelled he fled into the uttermost parts of Egypt.' The very moment that disease passes into the category of vital processes, and is recognised as an occurrence absolutely necessary, inevitable, and as one may say, normal under certain given conditions of constitution and circumstance, the medicine-man loses his half-miraculous endowments. The mythical serpent is untwined from the staff of Esculapius, which thenceforth becomes a useful walking-stick, and does not pretend to be anything more.

"Sin, like a disease, is a vital process. It is a function, and not an entity. It must be studied as a section of anthropology. No preconceived idea must be allowed to interfere with our

investigation of the deranged spiritual function, any more than the old ideas of demoniacal possession must be allowed to interfere with our study of epilepsy. Spiritual pathology is a proper subject for direct observation and analysis, like any other subject involving a series of living actions.

“In these living actions everything is progressive. There are sudden changes of character in what is called ‘conversion,’ which, at first, hardly seem to come into line with the common laws of evolution. But these changes have long been preparing, and it is just as much in the order of nature that certain characters should burst all at once from the rule of evil propensities, as it is that the evening primrose should explode, as it were, into bloom with audible sound, as you may read in Keats’s ‘Endymion,’ or observe in your own garden.

“There is a continual tendency in men to fence in themselves and a few of their neighbours who agree with them in their ideas, as if they were an exception to their race. We must not allow any creed or religion whatsoever to confiscate to its own private use and benefit the virtues which belong to our common humanity. The Good Samaritan helped his wounded neighbour simply because he was a suffering fellow-creature. Do you think your charitable act is more acceptable than the Good Samaritan’s, because you do it in the name of Him who made the memory of that kind man immortal? Do you mean that you would not give the cup of cold water for the sake simply and solely of the poor, suffering fellow-mortal, as willingly as you now do, professing to give it for the sake of Him who is not thirsty or in need of any help of yours? We must ask questions like this, if we are to claim for our common nature what belongs to it.

“The scientific study of man is the most difficult of all branches of knowledge. It requires, in the first place, an entire new terminology to get rid of that enormous load of prejudices with which every term applied to the malformations, the functional disturbances, and the organic diseases of the moral nature is at present burdened. Take that one word *Sin*, for instance; all those who have studied the subject from nature and not from books know perfectly well that a certain fraction of what is so called is nothing more or less than a symptom of hysteria; that another fraction is the index of a limited degree of insanity; that still another is the result of a congenital tendency which removes the act we sit in judgment upon from the sphere of self-determination, if not entirely, at least to such an extent that the subject of the tendency cannot be judged by any normal standard.

“To study nature without fear is possible, but without reproach, impossible. The man who worships in the temple of knowledge must carry his arms with him as our Puritan fathers had to do when they gathered in their first rude meeting-houses. It is a

fearful thing to meddle with the ark which holds the mysteries of creation. I remember that when I was a child the tradition was whispered round among us little folks that if we tried to count the stars we should drop down dead. Nevertheless, the stars have been counted and the astronomer has survived. This nursery legend is the child's version of those superstitions which would have strangled in their cradles the young sciences now adolescent and able to take care of themselves, and which, having been driven from their nursery, are watching with hostile aspect the rapid growth of the comparatively new science of man.

"The real difficulty of the student of nature at this time is to reconcile absolute freedom and perfect fearlessness with that respect for the past, that reverence for the spirit of reverence wherever we find it, that tenderness for the weakest fibres by which the hearts of our fellow-creatures hold to their religious convictions, which will make the transition from old belief to a larger light and liberty an interstitial change and not a violent mutilation.

"I remember once going into a little church in a small village some miles from a great European capital. The special object of adoration in this humblest of places of worship was a *bambino*, a holy infant, done in wax, and covered with cheap ornaments such as a little girl would like to beautify her doll with. Many a good Protestant of the old puritan type would have felt a strong impulse to seize this 'idolatrous' figure and dash it to pieces on the stone floor of the little church. But one must have lived awhile among simple-minded pious Catholics to know what this poor waxen image and the whole baby-house of *bambinos* mean for a humble, unlettered, unimaginative peasantry. He will find that the true office of this *eidolon* is to fix the mind of the worshipper, and that in virtue of the devotional thoughts it has called forth so often for so many years in the mind of that poor old woman who is kneeling before it, it is no longer a wax doll for her, but has undergone a transubstantiation quite as real as that of the Eucharist. The moral is that we must not roughly smash other people's idols because we know, or think we know, that they are of cheap human manufacture."

"Do you think cheap manufactures encourage idleness?" said I.

The Master stared. Well he might, for I had been getting a little drowsy, and, wishing to show that I had been awake and attentive, asked a question suggested by some words I had caught, but which showed that I had not been taking the slightest idea from what he was reading me. He stared, shook his head slowly, smiled good-humouredly, took off his great round spectacles, and shut up his book.

'*Sat prata biberunt*,' he said. 'A sick man that gets talking

about himself, a woman that gets talking about her baby, and an author that begins reading out of his own book, never know when to stop. You'll think of some of these things you've been getting half asleep over by-and-by. I don't want you to believe anything I say, I only want you to try to see what makes me believe it.'

My young friend, the Astronomer, has, I suspect, been making some addition to his manuscript. At any rate some of the lines he read us in the afternoon of this same day had never enjoyed the benefit of my revision, and I think they had but just been written. I noticed that his manner was somewhat more excited than usual, and his voice just towards the close a little tremulous. Perhaps I may attribute his improvement to the effect of my criticisms, but, whatever the reason, I think these lines are very nearly as correct as they would have been if I had looked them over :

## WIND-CLOUDS AND STAR-DRIFTS.

## VII.

What if a soul redeemed, a spirit that loved  
While yet on earth and was beloved in turn,  
And still remembered every look and tone  
Of that dear earthly sister who was left  
Among the unwise virgins at the gate,—  
Itself admitted with the bridegroom's train,—  
What if this spirit redeemed, amid the host  
Of chanting angels, in some transient lull  
Of the eternal anthem, heard the cry  
Of its lost darling, whom in evil hour  
Some wilder pulse of nature led astray  
And left an outcast in a world of fire,  
Condemned to be the sport of cruel fiends,  
Sleepless, unpitying, masters of the skill  
To wring the maddest ecstasies of pain  
From worn-out souls that only ask to die,—  
Would it not long to leave the bliss of Heaven,  
Bearing a little water in its hand  
To moisten those poor lips that plead in vain  
With Him we call our Father? Or is all  
So changed in such as taste celestial joy  
They hear unmoved the endless wail of woe,  
The daughter in the same dear tones that hushed  
Her cradled slumbers; she who once had held  
A babe upon her bosom from its voice  
Hoarse with its cry of anguish, yet the same?  
No! not in ages when the Dreadful Bird  
Stamped his huge footprints, and the Fearful Beast  
Strode with the flesh about those fossil bones.  
We build to mimic life with pigmy hands,—  
Not in those earliest days when men ran wild  
And gashed each other with their knives of stone,

## THE POET AT

When their low foreheads bulged in ridgy brows  
And their flat hands were callous in the palms  
With walking in the fashion of their sires,  
Groped as they might to find a cruel god  
To work their will on such as human wrath  
Had wrought its worst to torture, and had left  
With rage unsated, white and stark and cold,  
Could hate have shaped a demon more malign  
Than him the dead men mummied in their creed  
And taught their trembling children to adore?  
Made in *his* image! Sweet and gracious souls  
Dear to my heart by nature's fondest names,  
Is not your memory still the precious mould  
That lends its form to Him who hears my prayer?  
Thus only I behold him, like to them,  
Long-suffering, gentle, ever slow to wrath,  
If wrath it be that only wounds to heal,  
Ready to meet the wanderer ere he reach  
The door he seeks, forgetful of his sin,  
Longing to clasp him in a father's arms,  
And seal his pardon with a mother's tear!

Fear gospels tell their story to mankind,  
And none so full of soft, caressing words  
That bring the Maid of Ephlechem and her babe  
Before our tear-dimmed eyes, as his who learned  
In the meek service of his gracious art  
The sound which like the medicinal balm  
That calms the sufferer's anguish, soothes our souls.  
—Oh that the loving woman, she who sat  
So long a listener at her Master's feet,  
Had left us Mary's Gospel,—all she heard!  
Too sweet, too subtle for the ear of man!  
Mark how the tender-hearted mothers read  
The messages of love between the lines  
Of the same page that loads the bitter tongue  
Of him who deals in terror as his trade  
With threatening words of wrath that scorch like flame!  
They tell of angels whispering round the bed  
Of the sweet infant smiling in its dream,  
Of lambs enfolded in the Shepherd's arms,  
Of Him who blessed the children; of the land  
Where crystal rivers feed unfading flowers,  
Of cities golden-paved with streets of pearl,  
Of the white robes the winged creatures wear,  
The crowns and harps from whose melodious strings  
One long, sweet anthem flows for evermore!

We too had human mothers, even as Thou,  
Whom we have learned to worship as remote  
From mortal kindred, wast a cradled babe.  
The milk of woman filled our branching veins,  
She lulled us with her tender nursery-song,  
And folded round us her untiring arms,  
While the first unremembered twilight year  
Shaped us to conscious being, still we feel  
Her pulses in our own—too faintly feel;  
Would that the heart of woman warmed our creeds!

Not from the sad-eyed hermit's lonely cell,  
Not from the conclave where the holy men  
Glare on each other, as with angry eyes  
They battle for God's glory and their own,  
Till, sick of wordy life, a show of hands  
Fixes the faith of ages yet unborn,—  
Ah, not from these the listening soul can hear  
The Father's voice that speaks itself divine !  
Love must be still our Master ; till we learn  
What he can teach us of a woman's heart,  
We know not His, whose love embraces all.

There are certain nervous conditions peculiar to women in which the common effects of poetry and of music upon their sensibilities are strangely exaggerated. It was not perhaps to be wondered at that Octavia fainted when Virgil, in reading from his great poem, came to the line beginning '*Tu Marcellus eris.*' It is not hard to believe the story told of one of the two Davidson sisters, that the singing of some of Moore's plaintive melodies would so impress her as almost to take away the faculties of sense and motion. But there must have been some special cause for the singular nervous state into which this reading threw the young girl, our Scheherazade. She was doubtless tired with overwork and troubled with the thought that she was not doing herself justice, and that she was doomed to be the helpless prey of some of those corbies who not only pick out corbies' eyes, but find no other diet so nutritious and agreeable.

Whatever the cause may have been, her heart heaved tumultuously, her colour came and went, and though she managed to avoid a scene by the exercise of all her self-control, I watched her very anxiously, for I was afraid she would have had a hysteric turn, or in one of her pallid moments that she would have fainted and fallen like one dead before us.

I was very glad, therefore, when evening came, to find that she was going out for a lesson on the stars. I knew the open air was what she needed, and I thought the walk would do her good, whether she made any new astronomical acquisition or not.

It was now late in the autumn, and the trees were pretty nearly stripped of their leaves. There was no place so favourable as the Common for the study of the heavens. The skies were brilliant with stars, and the air was just keen enough to remind our young friends that the cold season was at hand. They wandered round for awhile, and at last found themselves under the Great Eln, drawn thither, no doubt, by the magnetism it is so well known to exert over the natives of its own soil and those who have often been under the shadow of its outstretched arms. The venerable survivor of its contemporaries that



flourished in the days when Blackstone rode beneath it on his bull, was now a good deal broken by age, yet not without marks of lusty vitality. It had been wrenched and twisted and battered by so many scores of winters, that some of its limbs were crippled and many of its joints were shaky, and but for the support of the iron braces that lent their strong sinews to its more infirm members, it would have gone to pieces in the first strenuous north-easter or the first sudden and violent gale from the south-west. But there it stood, and there it stands as yet—though its obituary was long ago written after one of the terrible storms that tore its branches—leafing out hopefully in April as if it were trying in its dumb language to lisp ‘Our Father,’ and dropping its slender burden of foliage in October as softly as if it were whispering ‘Amen.’

Not far from the ancient and monumental tree lay a small sheet of water, once agile with life and vocal with evening melodies, but now stirred only by the swallow as he dips his wing, or by the morning bath of the English sparrows, those high-headed, thick-bodied, full-feeding, hot-tempered little John Bulls that keep up such a swashing and swabbing and spattering round all the water-basins, one might think from the fuss they make about it that a bird never took a bath before, and that they were the missionaries of ablution to the unwashed Western world.

There are those who speak lightly of this small aqueous expanse, the eye of the sacred enclosure, which has looked unwinking on the happy faces of so many natives and the curious features of so many strangers. The music of its twilight minstrels has long ceased, but their memory lingers like an echo in the name it bears. Cherish it, inhabitants of the two-hilled city, once three-hilled; ye who have said to the mountain, ‘Remove hence,’ and turned the sea into dry land! May no contractor fill his pockets by undertaking to fill thee, thou granite-girdled lakelet, or drain the civic purse by drawing off thy waters! For art thou not the Palladium of our Troy? Didst thou not, like the divine image which was the safeguard of Ilium, fall from the skies; and if the Trojan could look with pride upon the heaven-descended form of the Goddess of Wisdom, cannot he who dwells by thy shining oval look in that mirror and contemplate Himself—the Native of Boston?

There must be some fatality which carries our young men and maidens in the direction of the Common when they have anything very particular to exchange their views about. At any rate I remember two of our young friends brought up here a good many years ago, and I understand that there is one path across the enclosure which a young man must not ask a young woman to take with him unless he means business, for an action

will hold for breach of promise, if she consents to accompany him, and he chooses to forget his obligations.

Our two young people stood at the western edge of the little pool, studying astronomy in the reflected firmament. The Pleiads were trembling in the waves before them, and the three great stars of Orion—for these constellations were both glittering in the eastern sky.

‘There is no place too humble for the glories of heaven to shine in,’ she said.

‘And their splendour makes even this little pool beautiful and noble,’ he answered. ‘Where is the light to come from that is to do as much for our poor human lives?’

A simple question enough, but the young girl felt her colour change as she answered, ‘From friendship, I think.’

Grazing only as yet—not striking full—hardly hitting at all—but there are questions and answers that come so very near, the wind of them alone almost takes the breath away.

There was an interval of silence. Two young persons can stand looking at water for a long time without feeling the necessity of speaking. Especially when the water is alive with stars and the young persons are thoughtful and impressible. The water seems to do half the thinking while one is looking at it; its movements are felt in the brain very much like thought. When I was in full training as a *flaneur*, I could stand on the Pont Neuf with the other experts in the great science of passive cerebration, and look at the river for half an hour with so little mental articulation that when I moved on it seemed as if my thinking-marrow had been asleep and was just waking up refreshed after its nap.

So the reader can easily account for the interval of silence. It is hard to tell how long it would have lasted, but just then a lubberly intrusive boy threw a great stone, which convulsed the firmament—the one at their feet, I mean. The six Pleiads disappeared as if in search of their lost sister; the belt of Orion was broken asunder, and a hundred worlds dissolved back into chaos. They turned away and strayed off into one of the more open paths, where the view of the sky over them was unobstructed. For some reason or other the astronomical lesson did not get on very fast this evening.

Presently the young man asked his pupil:

‘Do you know what the constellation directly over our heads is?’

‘Is it not Cassiopea?’ she asked, a little hesitatingly.

‘No, it is Andromeda. You ought not to have forgotten her, for I remember showing you a double star, the one in her right foot, through the equatorial telescope. You have not forgotten the double star—the two that shone for each other and made a little world by themselves.’

'No, indeed,' she answered, and blushed, and felt ashamed because she had said '*indeed*,' as if it had been an emotional recollection.

The double-star allusion struck another dead silence. She would have given a week's pay to any invisible attendant that would have cut her stay-lace.

At last : 'Do you know the story of Andromeda ?' he said.

'Perhaps I did once, but suppose I don't remember it ?'

He told her the story of the unfortunate maiden chained to a rock and waiting for a sea-beast that was coming to devour her, and how Perseus came and set her free, and won her love with her life. And then he began something about a young man chained to *his* rock, which was a star-gazer's tower, a prey by turns to ambition, and lonely self-contempt and unwholesome scorn of the life he looked down upon after the serenity of the firmament, and endless questionings that led him nowhere—and now he had only one more question to ask. He loved her. Would she break his chain?—He held both his hands out towards her, the palms together, as if they were fettered at the wrists. She took hold of them very gently ; parted them a little ; then wider—wider—and found herself all at once folded, unresistingly, in her lover's arms.

So there was a new double-star in the living firmament. The constellations seemed to kindle with new splendours as the student and the story-teller walked homeward in their light ; Alioth and Algol looked down on them as on the first pair of lovers they shone over, and the autumn air seemed full of harmonies as when the morning stars sang together.

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## XII.

THE Old Master had asked us, the Young Astronomer and myself, into his library, to hear him read some passages from his interleaved book. We three had formed a kind of little club without knowing it from the time when the young man began reading those extracts from his poetical reveries which I have reproduced in these pages. Perhaps we agreed in too many things—I suppose if we could have had a good hard-headed, old-fashioned New England divine to meet with us it might have acted as a wholesome corrective. For we had it all our own way ; the Lady's kindly remonstrance was taken in good part, but did not keep us from talking pretty freely, and as for the Young Girl, she listened with the tranquillity and fear-

lessness which a very simple trusting creed naturally gives those who hold it. The fewer out-works to the citadel of belief, the fewer points there are to be threatened and endangered.

The reader must not suppose that I even attempt to reproduce everything exactly as it took place in our conversations, or when we met to listen to the Master's prose or to the Young Astronomer's verse. I do not pretend to give all the pauses and interruptions by question or otherwise. I could not always do it if I tried, but I do not want to, for oftentimes it is better to let the speaker or reader go on continuously, although there may have been many breaks in the course of the conversation or reading. When, for instance, I by-and-by reproduce what the Landlady said to us, I shall give it almost without any hint that it was arrested in its flow from time to time by various expressions on the part of the hearers.

I can hardly say what the reason of it was, but it is very certain that I had a vague sense of some impending event as we took our seats in the Master's library. He seemed particularly anxious that we should be comfortably seated, and shook up the cushions of the armchairs himself and got them into the right places.

'Now go to sleep,' he said, 'or listen, just which you like best. But I am going to begin by telling you both a secret.

'*Liberavi animam meam.* That is the meaning of my book and of my literary life, if I may give such a name to that parti-coloured shred of human existence. I have unburdened myself in this book, and in some other pages, of what I was born to say. Many things that I have said in my ripe days have been aching in my soul since I was a mere child. I say aching, because they conflicted with many of my inherited beliefs, or rather traditions. I did not know then that two strains of blood were striving in me for the mastery—two! twenty, perhaps—twenty thousand, for aught I know—but represented to me by two—paternal and maternal. Blind forces, in themselves; shaping thoughts as they shaped features and battled for the moulding of constitution and the mingling of temperament.

'Philosophy and poetry came to me before I knew their names.

'Je fis mes premiers vers, sans savoir les écrire.

'Not verses so much as the stuff that verses are made of. I don't suppose that the thoughts which came up of themselves in my mind were so mighty different from what come up in the minds of other young folks. And that's the best reason I could give for telling 'em. I don't believe anything I've written is as good as it seemed to me when I wrote it,' he stopped, for he was afraid he was lying, 'not *much* that I've written, at any rate,' he said, with a smile at the honesty which made him qualify his statement. 'But I do know this: I have struck a good many

chords, first and last, in the consciousness of other people. I confess to a tender feeling for my little brood of thoughts. When they have been welcomed and praised it has pleased me, and if at any time they have been rudely handled and spitefully entreated it has cost me a little worry. I don't despise reputation, and I should like to be remembered as having said something worth lasting well enough to last.

'But all that is nothing to the main comfort I feel as a writer. I have got rid of something my mind could not keep to itself and rise as it was meant to into higher regions. I saw the aeronauts the other day emptying from the bags some of the sand that served as ballast. It glistened a moment in the sunlight as a slender shower, and then was lost and seen no more as it scattered itself unnoticed. But the air-ship rose higher as the sand was poured out, and so it seems to me I have felt myself getting above the mists and clouds whenever I have lightened myself of some portion of the mental ballast I have carried with me. Why should I hope or fear when I send out my book? I have had my reward, for I have wrought out my thought, I have said my say, I have freed my soul. I can afford to be forgotten.

'Look here!' he said. 'I keep oblivion always before me.' He pointed to a singularly perfect and beautiful trilobite which was lying on a pile of manuscripts. 'Each time I fill a sheet of paper with what I am writing, I lay it beneath this relic of a dead world, and project my thought forward into eternity as far as this extinct crustacean carries it backward. When my heart beats too lustily with vain hopes of being remembered, I press the cold fossil against it and it grows calm. I touch my forehead with it, and its anxious furrows grow smooth. Our world, too, with all its breathing life, is but a leaf to be folded with the other strata, and if I am only patient, by-and-by I shall be just as famous as imperious Cæsar himself, embedded with me in a conglomerate.'

He began reading:—"There is no new thing under the sun," said the Preacher. He would not say so now, if he should come to life for a little while, and have his photograph taken, and go up in a balloon, and take a trip by railroad and a voyage by steam-ship, and get a message from General Grant by the cable, and see a man's leg cut off without its hurting him. If it did not take his breath away and lay him out as flat as the Queen of Sheba was knocked over by the splendours of his court, he must have rivalled our Indians in the *nil admirari* line.

'For all that, it is a strange thing to see what numbers of new things are really old. There are many modern contrivances that are of as early date as the first man, if not thousands of centuries older. Everybody knows how all the arrangements of our tele-

scopes and microscopes are anticipated in the eye, and how our best musical instruments are surpassed by the larynx. But there are some very odd things any anatomist can tell, showing how our recent contrivances are anticipated in the human body. In the alimentary canal are certain pointed eminences called *villi*, and certain ridges called *valvulæ conniventes*. The makers of heating apparatus have exactly reproduced the first in the "pot" of their furnaces, and the second in many of the radiators to be seen in our public buildings. The object in the body and the heating apparatus is the same ; to increase the extent of surface.—We mix hair with plaster (as the Egyptians mixed straw with clay to make bricks) so that it shall hold more firmly. But before man had any artificial dwelling the same contrivance of mixing fibrous threads with a cohesive substance had been employed in the jointed fabric of his own spinal column. India-rubber is modern, but the yellow animal substance which is elastic like that, and serves the same purpose in the animal economy which that serves in our mechanical contrivances, is as old as the mammalia. The dome, the round and the Gothic arch, the groined roof, the flying buttress, are all familiar to those who have studied the bony frame of man. All forms of the lever and all the principal kinds of hinges are to be met with in our own frames. The valvular arrangements of the bloodvessels are unapproached by any artificial apparatus, and the arrangements for preventing friction are so perfect that two surfaces will play on each other for fourscore years or more and never once trouble their owner by catching or rubbing so as to be felt or heard.

'But stranger than these repetitions are the coincidences one finds in the manners and speech of antiquity and our own time. In the days when Flood Ireson was drawn in the cart by the Mænads of Marblehead, that fishing town had the name of nurturing a young population not over fond of strangers. It used to be said that if an unknown landsman showed himself in the streets, the boys would follow after him, crying, "Rock him ! Rock him ! He's got a long-tailed coat on !"

'Now if one opens the Odyssey, he will find that the Phæacians, three thousand years ago, were wonderfully like these youthful Marbleheaders. The blue-eyed Goddess who convoys Ulysses, under the disguise of a young maiden of the place, gives some excellent advice. "Hold your tongue," she says, "and don't look at anybody or ask any questions, for these are seafaring people, and don't like to have strangers round or anybody that does not belong here."

'Who would have thought that the saucy question "Does your mother know you're out?" is the very same that Horace addressed to the bore who attacked him in the *Via Sacra*?

' "Interpellandi locus hic erat ; Est tibi mater?  
Cognati, quis te salvo est opus?"

And think of the London cockney's prefix of the letter *k* to innocent words beginning with a vowel, having its prototype in the speech of the vulgar Roman, as may be seen in the verses of Catullus :

“ *Commoda dicebat, siquando commoda vellet  
Dicere, et insidias Arrins insidias*

“ *Et tum mirifice sperabat se esse locutum,  
Cum quantum poterat, dixerat insidias . . . .  
Hoc misso in Syriam, requierant omnibus aures . . . .  
Cum subito affertur nuncius horribilis ;  
Ionios fluctus, postquam illuc Arrins isset,  
Jam non Ionios esse, sed Hionios.*”

‘ Our neighbours of Manhattan have an excellent jest about our crooked streets which, if they were a little more familiar with a native author of unquestionable veracity, they would strike out from the letter of “ Our Boston Correspondent,” where it is a source of perennial hilarity. It is worth while to reprint, for the benefit of whom it may concern, a paragraph from the authentic history of the venerable Diedrich Knickerbocker :

“ The sage council, as has been mentioned in a preceding chapter, not being able to determine upon any plan for the building of their city—the cows, in a laudable fit of patriotism, took it under their peculiar charge, and as they went to and from pasture, established paths through the bushes, on each side of which the good folks built their houses ; which is one cause of the rambling and picturesque turns and labyrinths, which distinguish certain streets of New York at this very day.”

‘ When I was a little boy there came to stay with us for a while a young lady with a singularly white complexion. Now I had often seen the masons slacking lime, and I thought it was the whitest thing I had ever looked upon. So I always called this fair visitor of ours *Slacked Lime*. I think she is still living in a neighbouring State, and I am sure she has never forgotten the fanciful name I gave her. But within ten or a dozen years I have seen this very same comparison going the round of the papers, and credited to a Welsh poet, one David Ap Gwyllym, or something like that, by name.

‘ I turned a pretty sentence enough in one of my lectures about finding poppies springing up amidst the corn ; as if it had been foreseen by nature that wherever there should be hunger that asked for food, there would be pain that needed relief—and many years afterwards I had the pleasure of finding that Mistress Piozzi had been beforehand with me in suggesting the same moral reflection.

‘ I should like to carry some of my friends to see a giant beehive I have discovered. Its hum can be heard half a mile, and a great white swarm counts its tens of thousands. They pretend



to call it a planing-mill, but if it is not a bee-hive it is so like one that if a hundred people have not said so before, it is very singular that they have not. If I wrote verses I would try to bring it in, and I suppose people would start up in a dozen places, and say, "O, that bee-hive simile is mine—and besides, did not Mr. Bayard Taylor call the snowflakes 'white bees'?"

I think the Old Master had chosen these trivialities on purpose to amuse the Young Astronomer and myself, if possible, and so make sure of our keeping awake while he went on reading, as follows :

'How the sweet souls of all time strike the same note, the same because it is in unison with the divine voice that sings to them ! I read in the Zend Avesta, "No earthly man with a hundred-fold strength speaks so much evil as Mithra with heavenly strength speaks good. No earthly man with a hundred-fold strength does so much evil as Mithra with heavenly strength does good."

'And now leave Persia and Zoroaster, and come down with me to our own New England and one of our old Puritan preachers. It was in the dreadful days of the Salem Witchcraft delusion that one Jonathan Singletary, being then in the prison at Ipswich, gave his testimony as to certain fearful occurrences—a great noise, as of many cats climbing, skipping, and jumping, of throwing about of furniture, and of men walking in the chambers, with crackling and shaking as if the house would fall upon him.

"I was at present," he says, "something affrighted ; yet considering what I had lately heard made out by Mr. Mitchel at Cambridge, that there is more good in God than there is evil in sin, and that although God is the greatest good and sin the greatest evil, yet the first Being of evil cannot weane the scales or overpower the first Being of good : so considering that the authour of good was of greater power than the authour of evil, God was pleased of his goodness to keep me from being out of measure frightened."

'I shall always bless the memory of this poor, timid creature for saving that dear remembrance of "Matchless Mitchel." How many, like him, have thought they were preaching a new gospel when they were only re-affirming the principles which underlie the Magna Charter of humanity, and are common to the noblest utterances of all the nobler creeds ! But spoken by those solemn lips to those stern, simple-minded hearers, the words I have cited seem to me to have a fragrance like the precious ointment of spikenard with which Mary anointed her Master's feet. I can see the little bare meeting-house, with the godly deacons, and the grave matrons, and the comely maidens, and the sober manhood of the village, with the small group of college students sitting by themselves under the shadow of the awful Presidential Presence, all listening to that preaching, which was, as Cotton

Mather says, "as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice ;" and as the holy pastor utters those blessed words, which are not of any one church or age, but of all time, the humble place of worship is filled with their perfume, as the house where Mary knelt was filled with the odour of the precious ointment.'

The Master rose, as he finished reading this sentence, and, walking to the window, adjusted a curtain which he seemed to find a good deal of trouble in getting to hang just as he wanted it.

He came back to his armchair, and began reading again :

'If men would only open their eyes to the fact which stares them in the face from history, and is made clear enough by the slightest glance at the condition of mankind, that humanity is of immeasurably greater importance than their own or any other particular belief, they would no more attempt to make private property of the grace of God than to fence in the sunshine for their own special use and enjoyment.

'We are all tattooed in our cradles with the beliefs of our tribe; the record may seem superficial, but it is indelible. You cannot educate a man wholly out of the superstitious fears which were early implanted in his imagination; no matter how utterly his reason may reject them, he will still feel as the famous woman did about ghosts, *Je ne les crois pas, mais je les crains*—"I don't believe in them, but I am afraid of them, nevertheless."

'As people grow older they come at length to live so much in memory that they often think with a kind of pleasure of losing their dearest blessings. Nothing can be so perfect while we possess it as it will seem when remembered. The friend we love best may sometimes weary us by his presence or vex us by his infirmities. How sweet to think of him as he will be to us after we have outlived him ten or a dozen years! *Then* we recall him in his best moments, bid him stay with us as long as we want his company, and send him away when we wish to be alone again. One might alter Shenstone's well known epitaph to suit such a case :—

"Heu ! quanto minus est cum te vivo versari  
Quam erit (vel *esset*) tui mortui reminisse !"

"Alas ! how much less the delight of thy living presence  
Than will (or would) be that of remembering thee when  
thou hast left us !"

I want to stop here—I the Poet—and put in a few reflections of my own, suggested by what I have been giving the reader from the Master's Book, and in a similar vein.

How few things there are that do not change their whole aspect in the course of a single generation ! The landscape

around us is wholly different. Even the outlines of the hills that surround us are changed by the creeping of the villages with their spires and school-houses up their sides. The sky remains the same, and the ocean. A few old churchyards look very much as they used to, except, of course, in Boston, where the gravestones have been rooted up and planted in rows with walks between them, to the utter disgrace and ruin of our most venerated cemeteries. The Registry of Deeds and the Probate Office show us the same old folios, where we can read our grandfather's title to his estate (if we had a grandfather and he happened to own anything) and see how many pots and kettles there were in his kitchen by the inventory of his personal property.

Among living people none remain so long unchanged as the actors. I can see the same Othello to-day, if I choose, that I saw when I was a boy smothering Mrs. Duff-Desdemona with the pillow, under the instigations of Mr. Cooper-Iago. A few stone heavier than he was then, no doubt, but the same truculent blackamoor that took by the thr-r-r-oat the circumcised dog in Aleppo, and told us about it in the old Boston Theatre. In the course of a fortnight, if I care to cross the water, I can see Mademoiselle Dejazet in the same parts I saw her in under Louis Philippe, and be charmed by the same grace and vivacity which delighted my grandmother (if she was in Paris, and went to see her in the part of *Fanchon toute seule* at the *Theatre des Capucines*) in the days when the great Napoleon was still only First Consul.

The graveyard and the stage are pretty much the only places where you can expect to find your friends as you left them, five and twenty or fifty years ago. I have noticed, I may add, that old theatre-goers bring back the past with their stories more vividly than men with any other experiences. There were two old New-Yorkers that I used to love to sit talking with about the stage. One was a scholar and a writer of note ; a pleasant old gentleman, with the fresh cheek of an octogenarian Cupid. The other not less noted in his way, deep in local lore, large-brained, full-blooded, of somewhat perturbing and tumultuous presence. It was good to hear them talk of George Frederic Cooke, of Kean, and the lesser stars of those earlier constellations. Better still to breakfast with old Samuel Rogers, as some of my readers have done more than once, and hear him answer to the question who was the best actor he remembered, 'I think, on the whole, Garrick.'

If we did but know how to question these charming old people before it is too late ! About ten years, more or less, after the generation in advance of our own has all died off, it occurs to us all at once, 'There ! I can ask my old friend what he knows of that picture, it must be a Copley ; of that house and its legends

about which there is such a mystery. He (or she) must know all about that.' Too late! Too late!

Still, now and then one saves a reminiscence that means a good deal by means of a casual question. I asked the first of those old New-Yorkers the following question: 'Who, on the whole, seemed to you the most considerable person you ever met?'

Now it must be remembered that this was a man who had lived in a city that calls itself the metropolis, one who had been a member of the State and the National Legislature, who had come in contact with men of letters and men of business, with politicians and members of all the professions, during a long and distinguished public career. I paused for his answer with no little curiosity. Would it be one of the great Ex-Presidents whose names were known to all the world? would it be the silver-tongued orator of Kentucky or the 'God-like' champion of the Constitution, our New England Jupiter Capitolinus? Who would it be?

'Take it altogether,' he answered, very deliberately, 'I should say Colonel Elisha Williams was the most notable personage that I have met with.'

Colonel Elisha Williams! And who might he be, forsooth? A gentleman of singular distinction, you may be well assured, even though you are not familiar with his name; but as I am not writing a biographical dictionary, I shall leave it to my reader to find out who and what he was.

One would like to live long enough to witness certain things which will no doubt come to pass by and by. I remember that when one of our good-hearted old millionnaires was growing very infirm, his limbs failing him, and his trunk getting packed with the infirmities which mean that one is bound on a long journey, he said very simply and sweetly, 'I don't care about living a great deal longer, but I *should* like to live long enough to find out how much old ——' (a many-millioned fellow-citizen) 'is worth.' And without committing myself on the longevity question, I confess I should like to live long enough to see a few things happen that are like to come, sooner or later.

I want to hold the skull of Abraham in my hand. They will go through the Cave of Macpelah at Hebron, I feel sure, in the course of a few generations at the furthest, and as Dr. Robinson knows of nothing which should lead us to question the correctness of the tradition which regards this as the place of sepulture of Abraham and the other patriarchs, if he was embalmed after the Egyptian fashion, there is no reason why we may not find his mummied body in perfect preservation. I suppose the tomb of David will be explored by a commission in due time, and I should like to see the phrenological developments of that great king and divine singer and warm-blooded man. If, as seems

probable, the anthropological section of society manages to get round the curse that protects the bones of Shakespeare, I should like to see the dome which rounded itself over his imperial brain. Not that I am what is called a phrenologist, but I am curious as to the physical developments of these fellow-mortals of mine, and a little in want of a sensation.

I should like to live long enough to see the course of the Tiber turned, and the bottom of the river thoroughly dredged. I wonder if they would find the seven-branched golden candlestick brought from Jerusalem by Titus, and said to have been dropped from the Milvian bridge. I have often thought of going fishing for it some year when I wanted a vacation, as some of my friends used to go to Ireland to fish for salmon. There was an attempt of that kind, I think, a few years ago. We all know how it looks well enough from the figure of it on the Arch of Titus, but I should like to 'heft' it in my own hand, and carry it home and shine it up (excuse my colloquialisms), and sit down and look at it, and think and think until the Temple of Solomon built up its walls of hewn stone and its roofs of cedar around me as noiselessly as when it rose, and 'there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.'

All this, you will remember, Beloved, is a digression on my own account, and I now return to the Old Master whom I left smiling at his own alteration of Shenstone's celebrated inscription. He now begins reading again :

'I want it to be understood that I consider that a certain number of persons are at liberty to dislike me peremptorily, without showing cause, and that they give no offence whatever in so doing.'

'If I did not cheerfully acquiesce in this sentiment towards myself on the part of others, I should not feel at liberty to indulge my own aversions. I try to cultivate a Christian feeling to all my fellow-creatures, but inasmuch as I must also respect truth and honesty, I confess to myself a certain number of inalienable dislikes and prejudices, some of which may possibly be shared by others. Some of these are purely instinctive, for others I can assign a reason. Our likes and dislikes play so important a part in the Order of Things that it is well to see on what they are founded.

'There are persons I meet occasionally who are too intelligent by half for my liking. They know my thoughts beforehand, and tell me what I was going to say. Of course they are masters of all my knowledge, and a good deal besides ; have read all the books I have read, and in later editions ; have had all the experiences I have been through, and more too. In my private opinion every mother's son of them will lie at any time rather than confess ignorance.

'I have a kind of dread, rather than hatred, of persons with a large excess of vitality; great feeders, great laughers, great story-tellers, who come sweeping over their company with a huge tidal wave of animal spirits and boisterous merriment. I have pretty good spirits myself, and enjoy a little mild pleasantry, but I am oppressed and extinguished by these great lusty, noisy creatures, and feel as if I were a mute at a funeral when they get into full blast.

'I cannot get along much better with those drooping, languid people, whose vitality falls short as much as that of the others is in excess. I have not life enough for two; I wish I had. It is not very enlivening to meet a fellow-creature whose expression and accents say, "You are the hair that breaks the camel's back of my endurance, you are the last drop that makes my cup of woe run over;" persons whose heads drop on one side like those of toothless infants, whose voices recall the tones in which our old snuffing choir used to wail out the verses of

"'Life is the time to serve the Lord."

'There is another style which does not captivate me. I recognise an attempt at the *grand manner* now and then, in persons who are well enough in their way, but of no particular importance, socially or otherwise. Some family tradition of wealth or distinction is apt to be at the bottom of it, and it survives all the advantages that used to set it off. I like family pride as well as my neighbours, and respect the high-born fellow-citizen whose progenitors have not worked in their shirt-sleeves for the last two generations full as much as I ought to. But *grand père oblige*; a person with a known grandfather is too distinguished to find it necessary to put on airs. The few Royal Princes I have happened to know were very easy people to get along with, and had not half the social knee-action I have often seen in the collapsed dowagers who lifted their eyebrows at me in my earlier years.

'My heart does not warm as it should do towards the persons, not intimates, who are always too glad to see me when we meet by accident, and discover all at once that they have a vast deal to unbosom themselves of to me.

'There is one blameless person whom I cannot love and have no excuse for hating. It is the innocent fellow-creature, otherwise inoffensive to me, whom I find I have involuntary joined on turning a corner. I suppose the Mississippi, which was flowing quietly along, minding its own business, hates the Missouri for coming into it all at once with its muddy stream. I suppose the Missouri in like manner hates the Mississippi for diluting with its limpid, but insipid current the rich reminiscences of the varied soils through which its own

stream has wandered. I will not compare myself to the clear or the turbid current, but I will own that my heart sinks when I find all of a sudden I am in for a corner confluence, and I cease loving my neighbour as myself until I can get away from him.

‘These antipathies are at least weaknesses ; they may be sins in the eye of the Recording Angel. I often reproach myself with my wrong-doings. I should like sometimes to thank Heaven for saving me from some kinds of transgression, and even for granting me some qualities that if I dared I should be disposed to call virtues. I should do so, I suppose, if I did not remember the story of the Pharisee. That ought not to hinder me. The parable was told to illustrate a single virtue, humility, and the most unwarranted influences have been drawn from it as to the whole character of the two parties. It seems not at all unlikely, but rather probable, that the Pharisee was a fairer dealer, a better husband, and a more charitable person than the Publican, whose name has come down to us “linked with one virtue,” but who may have been guilty, for aught that appears to the contrary, of “a thousand crimes.” Remember how we limit the application of other parables. The lord, it will be recollected, commended the unjust steward because he had done *wisely*. His shrewdness was held up as an example, but after all he was a miserable swindler, and deserved the State-prison as much as many of our financial operators. The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is a perpetual warning against spiritual pride. But it must not frighten any one of us out of being thankful that he is not, like this or that neighbour, under bondage to strong drink or opium, that he is not an Erie Railroad Manager, and that his head rests in virtuous calm on his own pillow. If he prays in the morning to be kept out of temptation as well as for his daily bread, shall he not return thanks at night that he has not fallen into sin as well as that his stomach has been filled? I do not think the poor Pharisee has ever had fair play, and I am afraid a good many people sin with the comforting, half-latent intention of smiting their breasts afterwards and repeating the prayer of the Publican.’

(*Sensation.*)

This little movement which I have thus indicated seemed to give the Master new confidence in his audience. He turned over several pages until he came to a part of the interleaved volume where we could all see he had written in a passage of new matter *in red ink* as of special interest.

‘I told you,’ he said, ‘in Latin, and I repeat it in English, that I have freed my soul in these pages—I have spoken my mind. I have read you a few extracts, most of them of rather



slight texture, and some of them, you perhaps thought, whimsical. But I meant, if I thought you were in the right mood for listening to it, to read you some paragraphs which give in small compass the pith, the marrow, of all that my experience has taught me. Life is a fatal complaint, and an eminently contagious one. I took it early, as we all do, and have treated it all along with the best palliatives I could get hold of, inasmuch as I could find no radical cure for its evils, and have so far managed to keep pretty comfortable under it.

‘It is a great thing for a man to put the whole meaning of his life into a few paragraphs, if he does it so that others can make anything out of it. If he conveys his wisdom after the fashion of the old alchemists, he may as well let it alone. He must talk in very plain words, and that is what I have done. You want to know what a certain number of scores of years have taught me that I think best worth telling. If I had half a dozen square inches of paper, and one penful of ink, and five minutes to use them in for the instruction of those who come after me, what should I put down in writing? That is the question.

‘Perhaps I should be wiser if I refused to attempt any such brief statement of the most valuable lesson that life has taught me. I am by no means sure that I had not better draw my pen through the page that holds the quintessence of my vital experiences, and leave those who wish to know what it is to distil it themselves from my many printed pages. But I have excited your curiosity, and I see that you are impatient to hear what the wisdom, or the folly, it may be, of a life shows for, when it is crowded into a few lines as the fragrance of a gardenful of roses is concentrated in a few drops of perfume.’

By this time I confess I was myself a little excited. *What was he going to tell us?* The Young Astronomer looked upon him with an eye as clear and steady and brilliant as the evening star, but I could see that he too was a little nervous, wondering what would come next.

The Old Master adjusted his large round spectacles, and began :

‘It has cost me fifty years to find my place in the Order of Things. I had explored all the sciences ; I had studied the literature of all ages ; I had travelled in many lands ; I had learned how to follow the working of thought in men and of sentiment and instinct in women. I had examined for myself all the religions that could make out any claim for themselves. I had fasted and prayed with the monks of a lonely convent ; I had mingled with the crowds that shouted glory at camp-meetings : I had listened to the threats of Calvinists and the promises of Universalists ; I had been a devout attendant on a Jewish Synagogue ; I was in correspondence with an intelligent Buddhist ; and I met frequently with the inner circle of Rationalists, who

believed in the persistence of Force, and the identity of alimentary substances with virtue, and were reconstructing the universe on this basis, with absolute exclusion of all Supernumeraries. In these pursuits I had passed the larger part of my half-century of existence, as yet with little satisfaction. It was on the morning of my fiftieth birthday that the solution of the great problem I had sought so long came to me as a simple formula, with a few grand but obvious inferences. I will repeat the substance of this final intuition :

*'The one central fact in the Order of Things which solves all questions is——'*

At this moment we were interrupted by a knock at the Master's door. It was most inopportune, for he was on the point of the great disclosure, but common politeness compelled him to answer it, and as the step which we had heard was that of one of the softer-footed sex, he chose to rise from his chair and admit his visitor.

This visitor was our Landlady. She was dressed with more than usual nicety, and her countenance showed clearly that she came charged with an important communication.

'I didn't know there was company with you,' said the Landlady, 'but it's jest as well. I've got something to tell my boarders that I don't want to tell them, and if I must do it, I may as well tell you all at once as one to a time. I'm agoing to give up keeping boarders at the end of this year—I mean come the end of December.'

She took out a white handkerchief, at hand in expectation of what was to happen, and pressed it to her eyes. There was an interval of silence. The Master closed his book, and laid it on the table. The Young Astronomer did not look as much surprised as I should have expected. I was completely taken aback—I had not thought of such a sudden breaking up of our little circle.

When the Landlady had recovered her composure, she began again.

'The Lady that's been so long with me is going to a house of her own—one she has bought back again, for it used to belong to her folks. It's a beautiful house, and the sun shines in at the front windows all day long. She's going to be wealthy again, but it doesn't make any difference in her ways. I've had boarders complain when I was doing as well as I knowed how for them, but I never heerd a word} from her that wasn't as pleasant as if she'd been talking to the Governor's lady. I've know'd what it was to have women-boarders that find fault—there's some of 'em would quarrel with me and everybody at my table ; they would quarrel with the Angel Gabriel if he lived in the house with 'em, and scold at him and tell him he was always dropping

his feathers round, if they couldn't find anything else to bring up against him.

'Two other boarders of mine has given me notice that they was expecting to leave come the first of January. I could fill up their places easy enough, for ever since that first book was wrote that called people's attention to my boarding-house, I've had more wanting to come than I wanted to keep.

'But I'm getting along in life, and I ain't quite so rugged as I used to be. My daughter is well settled and my son is making his own living. I've done a good deal of hard work in my time, and I feel as if I had a right to a little rest. There's nobody knows what a woman that has the charge of a family goes through, but God Almighty that made her. I've done my best for them that I loved, and for them that was under my roof. My husband and my children was well cared for when they lived, and he and them little ones that I buried has white marble head-stones and foot-stones, and an iron fence round the lot, and a place left for me betwixt him and the . . . .

'Some has always been good to me—some has made it a little of a strain to me to get along. When a woman's back aches with overworking herself to keep her house in shape, and a dozen mouths are opening at her three times a day, like them little young birds that split their heads open so you can a'most see into their empty stomachs, and one wants this and another wants that, and provisions is dear and rent is high, and nobody to look to—then a sharp word cuts, I tell you, and a hard look goes right to your heart. I've seen a boarder make a face at what I set before him, when I had tried to suit him jest as well as I knew how, and I haven't cared to eat a thing myself all the rest of that day, and I've laid awake without a wink of sleep all night. And then when you come down the next morning all the boarders stare at you and wonder what makes you so low-spirited, and why you don't look as happy and talk as cheerful as one of them rich ladies that has dinner-parties, where they've nothing to do but give a few orders, and somebody comes and cooks their dinner, and somebody else comes and puts flowers on the table, and a lot of men dressed up like ministers come and wait on everybody, as attentive as undertakers at a funeral.

'And that reminds me to tell you that I'm a-going to live with my daughter. Her husband's a very nice man, and when he isn't following a corpse, he's as good company as if he was a member of the city council. My son, he's a-going into business with the old Doctor he studied with, and he's going to board with me at my daughter's for a while—I suppose he'll be getting a wife before long.' (This with a pointed look at our friend, the Astronomer.)

‘It isn’t but a little while longer that we are going to be together, and I want to say to you gentlemen as I mean to say to the others and as I have said to our two ladies, that I feel more obligated to you for the way you’ve treated me than I know very well how to put into words. Boarders sometimes expect too much of the ladies that provides for them. Some days the meals are better than other days ; it can’t help being so. Sometimes the provision-market isn’t well supplied, sometimes the fire in the cooking-stove doesn’t burn so well as it does other days ; sometimes the cook isn’t so lucky as she might be. And there is boarders who is always laying in wait for the days when the meals is not quite so good as they commonly be, to pick a quarrel with the one that is trying to serve them so as that they shall be satisfied. But you’ve all been good and kind to me. I suppose I’m not quite so spry and quick-sighted as I was a dozen years ago, when my boarder wrote that first book so many have asked me about. But now I’m going to stop taking boarders. I don’t believe you’ll think much about what I didn’t do—because I couldn’t—but remember that, at any rate, I tried honestly to serve you. I hope God will bless all that set at my table, old and young, rich and poor, merried and single, and single that hope soon to be merried. My husband that’s dead and gone always believed that we all get to heaven sooner or later—and sence I’ve grown older and buried so many that I’ve loved, I’ve come to feel that perhaps I should meet all of them that I’ve known here—or at least as many of ’em as I wanted to—in a better world. And though I don’t calculate there is any boarding-houses in heaven, I hope I shall some time or other meet them that has set round my table one year after another, all together, where there is no fault-finding with the food and no occasion for it—and if I do meet them and you there—or anywhere—if there is anything I can do for you . . .’

. . . Poor dear soul ! Her ideas had got a little mixed, and her heart was overflowing, and the white handkerchief closed the scene with its timely and greatly-needed service.

What a pity, I have often thought, that she came in just at that precise moment ! For the Old Master was on the point of telling us, and through one of us the reading world—I mean that fraction of it which has reached this point of the record—at any rate, of telling you, Beloved, through my pen, his solution of a great problem we all have to deal with. We were some weeks longer together, but he never offered to continue his reading. At length I ventured to give him a hint that our young friend and myself would both of us be greatly gratified if he would begin reading from his unpublished page where he had left off.

‘No, sir,’ he said, ‘better not, better not. That which means

so much to me, the writer, might be a disappointment, or at least a puzzle, to you, the listener. Besides, if you'll take my printed book, and be at the trouble of thinking over what it says, and put that with what you've heard me say, and then make those comments and reflections which will be suggested to a mind in so many respects like mine as is your own—excuse my good opinion of myself—' ('It is a high compliment to me,' I replied,) 'you will perhaps find you have the elements of the formula and its consequences which I was about to read you. It's quite as well to crack your own filberts as to borrow the use of other people's teeth. I think we will wait awhile before we pour out the *Elixir Vita*.'

To tell the honest truth, I suspect the Master has found out that his formula does not hold water quite so perfectly as he was thinking, so long as he kept it to himself, and never thought of imparting it to anybody else. The very minute a thought is threatened with publicity, it seems to shrink towards mediocrity, as I have noticed that a great pumpkin, the wonder of a village, seemed to lose at least a third of its dimensions between the field where it grew and the cattle-show fair-table, where it took its place with other enormous pumpkins from other wondering villages. But however that may be, I shall always regret that I had not the opportunity of judging for myself how completely the Master's formula, which, for him, at least, seemed to have solved the great problem, would have accomplished that desirable end for me.

The Landlady's announcement of her intention to give up keeping boarders was heard with regret by all who met around her table. The Member of the Haouse inquired of me whether I could tell him if the Lamb Tahvern was kept well abaout these times. He knew that members from his place used to stop there, but he hadn't heerd much abaout it of late years. I had to inform him that that fold of rural innocence had long ceased offering his hospitalities to the legislative flock. He found refuge at last, I have learned, in a great public-house in the northern section of the city, where, as he said, the folks all went upstairs in a rat-trap, and the last I heard of him was looking out of his somewhat elevated attic-window in a northwesterly direction in hopes that he might perhaps get a sight of the Grand Monadnock, a mountain in New Hampshire, which I have myself seen from the top of Bunker Hill Monument.

The Member of the Haouse seems to have been more in a hurry to find a new resting-place than the other boarders. By the first of January, however, our whole company was scattered, never to meet again around the board where we had been so long together.

The Lady moved to the house where she had passed many of her prosperous years. It had been occupied by a rich family

who had taken it nearly as it stood, and as the pictures had been dusted regularly, and the books had never been handled, she found everything in many respects as she had left it and in some points improved, for the rich people did not know what else to do, and so they spent money without stint on their house and its adornments, by all of which she could not help profiting. I do not choose to give the street and number of the house where she lives, but a great many poor people know very well where it is, and as a matter of course the rich ones roll up to her door in their carriages by the dozen every fine Monday while anybody is in town.

It is whispered that our two young folks are to be married before another season, and that the Lady has asked them to come and stay with her for a while. Our Scheherazade is to write no more stories. It is astonishing to see what a change for the better in her aspect a few weeks of brain-rest and heart's ease have wrought in her. I doubt very much whether she ever returns to literary labour. The work itself was almost heart-breaking, but the effect upon her of the sneers and cynical insolences of the literary rough who came at her in mask and brass knuckles was to give her what I fear will be a lifelong disgust against any writing for the public, especially in any of the periodicals. I am not sorry that she should stop writing, but I am sorry that she should have been silenced in such a rude way. I doubt, too, whether the young Astronomer will pass the rest of his life in hunting for comets and planets. I think he has found an attraction that will call him down from the celestial luminaries to a light not less pure and far less remote. And I am inclined to believe that the best answer to many of those questions which have haunted him and found expression in his verse will be reached by a very different channel from that of lonely contemplation—the duties, the cares, the responsible realities of a life drawn out of itself by the power of newly awakened instincts and affections. The double star was prophetic—I thought it would be.

The Registrar of Deeds is understood to have been very handsomely treated by the boarder who owes her good fortune to his sagacity and activity. He has engaged apartments at a very genteel boarding-house not far from the one where we have all been living. The Salesman found it a simple matter to transfer himself to an establishment over the way; he had very little to move, and required very small accommodations.

The Capitalist, however, seems to have felt it impossible to move without ridding himself of a part at least of his encumbrances. The community was startled by the announcement that a citizen who did not wish his name to be known had made a free gift of a large sum of money—it was in tens of

thousands—to an institution of long standing and high character in the city of which he was a quiet resident. The source of such a gift could not long be kept a secret. It was our economical, not to say parsimonious Capitalist who had done this noble act, and the poor man had to skulk through back streets and keep out of sight, as if he was a show character in a travelling caravan, to avoid the acknowledgments of his liberality, which met him on every hand and put him fairly out of countenance.

That Boy has gone, in virtue of a special invitation, to make a visit of indefinite length at the house of the father of the older boy, whom we know by the name of Johnny. Of course he is having a good time, for Johnny's father is full of fun, and tells first-rate stories and if neither of the boys gets his brains kicked out by the pony, or blows himself up with gunpowder, or breaks through the ice and gets drowned, they will have a fine time of it this winter.

The Scarabee could not bear to remove his collections, and the Old Master was equally unwilling to disturb his books. It was arranged, therefore, that they should keep their apartments until the new tenant should come into the house, when, if they were satisfied with her management, they would continue as her boarders.

The last time I saw him he was still at work on the *meloë* question. He expressed himself very pleasantly towards all of us, his fellow-boarders, and spoke of the kindness and consideration with which the Landlady had treated him when he had been straitened at times for want of means. Especially he seemed to be interested in our young couple who were soon to be united. His tired old eyes glistened as he asked about them—could it be that their little romance recalled some early vision of his own? However that may be, he got up presently and went to a little box in which, as he said, he kept some choice specimens. He brought to me in his hand something which glittered. It was an exquisite diamond beetle.

'If you could get that to her,' he said, 'they tell me that ladies sometimes wear them in their hair. If they are out of fashion, she can keep it till after they're married, and then perhaps after a while there may be—you know—you know what I mean—there may be—*larvæ*, that's what I'm thinking there may be, and they'll like to look at it.'

As he got out the word *larvæ*, a faint sense of the ridiculous seemed to take hold of the Scarabee, and for the first and only time during my acquaintance with him a slight attempt at a smile showed itself on his features. It was barely perceptible and gone almost as soon as seen, yet I am pleased to put



it on record that on one occasion at least in his life the Scarabee smiled.

The Old Master keeps adding notes and reflections and new suggestions to his interleaved volume, but I doubt if he ever gives them to the public. The study he has proposed to himself does not grow easier the longer it is pursued. The whole Order of Things can hardly be completely unravelled in any single person's lifetime, and I suspect he will have to adjourn the final stage of his investigations to that more luminous realm where the Landlady hopes to rejoin the company of boarders who are nevermore to meet around her cheerful and well-ordered table.

The curtain has now fallen, and I show myself a moment before it to thank my audience and say farewell. The second comer is commonly less welcome than the first, and the third makes but a rash venture. I hope I have not wholly disappointed those who have been so kind to my predecessors.

To you, Beloved, who have never failed to cut the leaves which held my record, who have never nodded over its pages, who have never hesitated in your allegiance, who have greeted me with unfailing smile and part from me with unfeigned regrets, to you I look my last adieu as I bow myself out of sight, trusting my poor efforts to your always kind remembrance.

## EPILOGUE TO THE BREAKFAST-TABLE SERIES:

## AUTOCRAT—PROFESSOR—POET.

## AT A BOOKSTORE.

*Anno Domini 1972.*

A CRAZY bookcase, placed before  
 A low-price dealer's open door ;  
 Therein arrayed in broken rows  
 A ragged crew of rhyme and prose.  
 The homeless vagrants, waifs and strays  
 Whose low estate this line betrays  
 (Set forth the lesser birds to lime)  
**YOUR CHOICE AMONG THESE BOOKS, & DINE !**

Ho ! dealer ; for its motto's sake  
 This scarecrow from the shelf I take ;  
 Three starveling volumes bound in one,  
 Its covers warping in the sun,  
 Methinks it hath a musty smell,  
 I like its flavour none too well,  
 But Yorick's brain was far from dull,  
 Though Hamlet pah ! 'd, and dropped his skull.

Why, here comes rain ! The sky grows dark,—  
 Was that the roll of thunder ? Hark !  
 The shop affords a safe retreat,  
 A chair extends its welcome seat,  
 The tradesman has a civil look  
 (I've paid, impromptu, for my book).  
 The clouds portend a sudden shower,—  
 I'll read my purchase for an hour.

\* \* \* \* \*

What have I rescued from the shelf ?  
 A Boswell, writing out himself !  
 For though he changes dress and name,  
 The man beneath is still the same,  
 Laughing or sad, by fits and starts,  
 One actor in a dozen parts,  
 And whatsoe'er the mask may be,  
 The voice assures us, *This is he.*

I say not this to cry him down ;  
 I find my Shakespeare in his clown,  
 His rogues the self-same parent own ;  
 Nay ! Satan talks in Milton's tone !  
 Where'er the ocean inlet strays,  
 The salt sea wave its source betrays,  
 Where'er the queen of summer blows,  
 She tells the zephyr, ' I'm the rose !'

And his is not the playwright's page ;  
 His table does not ape the stage ;  
 What matter if the figures seen  
 Are only shadows on a screen ?  
 He finds in them his lurking thought,  
 And on their lips the words he sought,  
 Like one who sits before the keys  
 And plays a tune himself to please.

And was he noted in his day ?  
 Read, flattered, honoured ? Who shall say ?  
 Poor wreck of time the wave has cast  
 To find a peaceful shore at last,  
 Once glorying in thy gilded name  
 And freighted deep with hopes of fame,  
 Thy leaf is moistened with a tear,  
 The first for many a long, long year !

For be it more or less of art  
 That veils the lowliest human heart,  
 Where passion throbs, where friendship glows,  
 Where pity's tender tribute flows,  
 Where love has lit its fragrant fire,  
 And sorrow quenched its vain desire,  
 For me the altar is divine,  
 Its flame, its ashes—all are mine !

And thou, my brother, as I look  
 And see thee pictured in thy book,  
 Thy years on every page confessed  
 In shadows lengthening from the west,  
 Thy glance that wanders, as it sought  
 Some freshly opening flower of thought,  
 Thy hopeful nature, light and free,  
 I start to find myself in thee !

\* \* \* \* \*

Come, vagrant, outcast, wretch forlorn,  
 In leather jerkin stained and torn,  
 Whose talk has filled my idle hour  
 And made me half forget the shower,  
 I'll do at least as much for you,  
 Your coat I'll patch, your guilt renew,  
 Read you—perhaps—some other time.  
 Not bad, my bargain ! Price one dime.

THE END.



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